

THE RIVALS.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE COLLEGIANS."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER XVII.

ESTHER was standing near the cottage window, and looking out upon the storm-lit lake, when her husband hurried into the apartment, exhausted from his late adventure, and from the speed with which he had hurried downward from the glen. He disguised the cause of his agitation from Esther, and was occupied in quiet converse with her, when they were surprised by the entrance of the servant, to say that there were three Peelers outside bearing a wounded

gentleman in a cloak, who had come to request a lodging for the night.

"Not here! not here!" said Francis, in deep agitation.

"Not here, Francis?" echoed Esther, in surprise.

"He is ravin' mad, sir," said the servant; "and the men say his head is touched some way."

"Masther Frank," said Lenigan, thrusting his head into the room, "he's abroad, an' a'most dead. If its a bleedher he wants, I have a lancet here in my pocket, an' I'll do the business in a minute."

Francis paused for a moment in deep thought, and then, suddenly turning to the servant, he bade the strange gentleman be carried into the little room which lay on the far end of the cottage, and desired that Davy should instantly attend with his lancet, while one of the horsemen rode off for a more experienced medical attendant.

"And now, Esther," said Francis, closing

the door after the servants, "what's to be done? This gentleman is an old friend of yours."

"Of mine, Frank!"

"Aye, of yours. And not the least esteemed, nor the least successful amongst them, neither. This man is Lacy."

"Oh, Francis," exclaimed Esther, suddenly clasping his shoulder, and looking in his face with an expression of mingled pity and alarm, "I hope he is not hurt to danger."

"I hope so too—heaven knows, I hope so too," said her husband, with sincere emphasis. "He received the injury from me, in an effort which I made to save myself from an assault that was made by him upon my life."

Very soon after, Davy re-entered, to say that the magistrate had received but a very slight injury, and that he would, if it were not for the urgency of his attendants, have got on horseback once more with the view of returning to his own abode. Strangely enough, this intelligence of

Lacy's safety seemed to restore all his abated hostility to the heart of Riordan. He gave Esther a detailed account of the occurrence which had taken place at the fall.

"He is beneath my roof!" he exclaimed, as he concluded, standing erect, and lifting his hand into the air—"He is beneath my roof, and therefore let him take his rest in peace! He is helpless and a stranger, and therefore let his million crimes be covered, while he stays. For this, I think not of his causeless hate—his unremitting wiles against my fame and life—his bloody practices upon my poor dependants—my own long exile from my native soil—the agony of my return—the loss of the best years of my existence—all these, and this last treacherous effort at my life, must be forgiven for this night. To-night he is your guest, Esther; for I will never couch my head beneath the roof that shelters that bad man!"

"How, Francis?"

"Esther, dear Esther, I have not sufficient confidence in my own self-command to stay. If you will have me strive against this feeling, I will remain to please you, but bind me hard, I warn you! I have an animal dislike to Lacy, a detestation that will acknowledge no influence of reason, and nothing short of physical coercion could render me secure of my self-government. Ah, that this beast should be let forth again to waste the nation of the poor with fire and famine!"

He left the house, after cautioning Esther to avoid the eyes of the strangers, and hurried off to a neighbouring cottage, inhabited by the family of one of his servants. Esther, in the mean time, remained in the cottage in deep perplexity of mind.

Two or three times before midnight, Francis returned on some pretext or another, and Esther thought that at each time there was something paler and sterner in his aspect than before. She questioned him on many subjects, but his an-

swers were vague and absent, and his lip had turned outward, with that hue of livid blue which it wore whenever the heart of the man was wound up to some enterprize of danger. He asked hastily some questions concerning Lacy, paced gloomily up and down the little apartment, and at length turning hastily to Esther, said:

"Is it not hard that one should be forced to play the cony about one's own house to avoid the tooth of such a venomed weasel as this Lacy?"

"Well, but for one night, Francis."

"How the wind howls yet! 'Tis a horrid night!"

"His attendants say that he will by no means consent to remain longer than the night."

"Indeed?"

"And it was with difficulty they prevented his sudden departure on the instant."

"I would they had let him go:" said

Francis, in a deep tone, and as if unconscious of being heard.

"And wherefore, Francis?"

He did not answer the question, but continued for a long time to gaze in deep abstraction on the window. His face, like that of a person struggling to subdue the expression of an intense agony, changed colour several times, and, when he spoke again, his voice was harsh and altered, as if passion could exercise upon the organs the influence of time or of disease.

"Esther," said he, "I have changed my mind. I will not sleep out to night."

From some undefinable cause, Esther felt a sudden alarm at this new resolution. She imagined that her husband had formed the intention of visiting Lacy, in his chamber, and she could form no idea of any other termination to such a meeting than one of violence and cruelty. After vainly endeavouring to

sound her husband's purpose, she resolved to baffle it at all events, by a course of action which had something in it scarcely less hazardous than the rencontre which she feared.

Returning fully to the consciousness of his condition, Richard Lacy passed the night in an agony of disappointed hate, of wild impatience, and of mental torture, in the comparison with which the physical suffering that he endured was trivial. Stretched upon the rack of passion, and stung by the assaults of the direst species of remorse, the sense of guilt intended and attempted, not enjoyed, his imagination magnified the miseries of his condition and awoke within his heart the first thought of fear which he had entertained for many a day.

He believed that his hurt was likely to be productive of more serious effects than were anticipated by his attendants, and many hours were consumed in gloomy meditation on the

nature of the change which death might bring to him. That delirious extravagence of passion which made him on one occasion reflect with agony on the possible re-union of Esther and Francis, in another world, now moved him with strong terror on his own account. He pictured to himself the spirit of Esther Wilderming reposing in that paradise, in the existence of which, the course of his early education and the movements of his reason taught him to believe, and he referred, with a wild uneasiness, to the character of his own life, and its probable retribution.

While he thought of these things, sitting dressed in an arm-chair, he heard one of the servants, an old woman, sing, in a low voice, an Irish song, of which the following is a translation. It struck him forcibly, at the time, as it represented a kind of sorrow for which he had often given occasion—the grief of a mother for a perished son:

I.

My darling, my darling, when silence is on the moor,
And, lone in the sunshine, I sit by our cabin door;
When evening falls quiet and calm over land and sea,
My darling, my darling, I think of past times and thee!

II.

Here, while on this cold shore I wear out my lonely hours,
My child in the heavens is spreading my bed with flowers.
All weary my bosom is grown of this friendless clime
But I long not to leave it, for that were a shame and crime.

III.

They bear to the churchyard the young in their health away,
I know where a fruit hangs more ripe for the grave than they ·
But I wish not for death, for my spirit is all resigned,
And the hope that stays with me gives peace to my aged mind.

IV.

My darling, my darling, God gave to my feeble age
A prop for my faint heart, a stay in my pilgrimage:
My darling, my darling, God takes back his gift again;
And my heart may be broken, but ne'er shall my will complain

When the song had ended, and while Lacy lay indulging the reflections to which it gave

occasion, a slight noise, on one side of his bed, made him turn round and gaze in that direction. His attendants were sleeping on pallets in the kitchen, after having been plentifully supplied with drink from the parlour, and a deep silence fell on all the house.

Some person had pushed in the door, but seemed unwilling to enter. After waiting for a few moments in suspense, Lacy demanded to know who was there, but received no reply. He waited for a little time and repeated his question, still without effect. A third time, after a long pause, he renewed the query, with some little anxiety of mind, and a third time it remained unanswered. He turned away, rather annoyed, and in the action thought he could discern the flitting of a white dress across the threshold of the door. He turned again, and saw, indeed, a figure completely attired in white, and with a head-dress which fell down so far over the forehead as to conceal every feature except

the chin from observation, and that was paler than the drapery through which it appeared. Even this single indication was sufficient to freeze the blood of Lacy with a terrific recognition, and he sat up in the bed in an access of sudden horror. *It needed not the* approach of that slow-moving figure; it needed not the lifting of the rigid hand; it needed not the removal of that heavy veil; and the sight of the long pale features, and the glassy eyes that were beneath, to convince the frighted invalid that he was in the presence of the shade of Esther Wilderming.

For a time, his terror swallowed up every other feeling, and he could do nothing but pant and gape and stare upon the figure, while he leaned forward on both his hands, his eye dilated, and his parted lips drawn downward at the corners with an expression of deep-seated horror. His brow became in one minute white, red, moist, and glistening, now cold as earth, and now burning with a sudden fever.

A swift convulsion shook every member of his frame, and then it rested stiff and motionless, as if it were struck by a sympathetic death. The light seemed to change its colour, the objects in the room dilated and grew indistinct, the sounds that were before so gentle, that the silence of midnight scarcely served to make them audible, seemed now to have acquired a strange and preternatural loudness, and the sense of feeling became so painfully acute, that the floating atoms in the air were felt distinctly as they settled on his brow.

"Esther," he hoarsely murmured, after several vain efforts to articulate the word, "what is it troubles you?"

She raised a hand, as if with a cautionary action.

"Speak to me!" said Lacy, still in deep agitation, "speak to me, though you loved me not in life. Oh, Esther, speak at once—if you are ill at ease, and there be any thing in

Lacy's power to give you peace, ah, make him blessed by telling it."

As he raised his voice, in the vehemency of his adjuration, the figure slowly repeated the former action. Lacy started back, in sudden terror, at every movement of the spectre, and felt a difficulty in mustering his spirits again to address it.

"The innocent," he said at length, in a low and earnest voice, "the innocent, it is said, fear ye not. I have not that security. The blood of many victims, the sufferings of youth, the tears of age, the groans of severed hearts, and homes bereaved of joy, the memory of passions long indulged, and feasted upon crime and human woe, all these surround me in this fell extremity, and tear away my trust in days gone by. I have not the security of innocence, and yet behold, my Esther, I fear not you! All terrible as you are, wrapt in the pomp of death, and clothed in all the horrors of the

grave, I fear not you, my love! though my limbs tremble, and my nerves are dragged to agony, though my eyes wander, though my speech grows hoarse, and though the blood is thickening at my heart, I fear you not, I love you through my fears! Oh, by these trembling limbs, this scared and terrified, yet doting heart, these eyes that you have long bereft of light, I pray you Esther, speak to me! Come nearer, though it be to blast me——Come! —— I will not believe that you would injure me, for you were ever gentle and forbearing, and where is the hand that could inflict a pain upon the heart that loves it? But, whether you be come in anger or in love, in mercy or in vengeance, yet welcome to my presence, Esther Wilderming. In hate or in affection, in life or death, I have still a horrid rapture in your company."

He paused suddenly, as the figure again elevated one hand and seemed about to speak. Still as a statue, he remained with his eyes

rivetted upon the parted lips of the appearance, while the words came forth, distinct and low, and almost without a motion of the feature.

" Hear me ! " said Esther.

The first accents of her voice made Lacy shrink quickly down, like one who is startled by a sudden and terrific sound.

" I am your friend, and come to warn you," continued the figure. " Arise, and leave this house."

" Wherefore ? "

" You are in danger. Wait not one other hour. Depart in silence and with speed."

" Who is my enemy ? "

" That must not be revealed. But you have many. I would not leave you in the danger of any one's revenge."

" I am guarded, Esther."

" Do not trust to that. Silence and the night are fearful accessaries against you. Revenge can use the noiseless pace of Murder.

It grows in secret, it walks in silence, it glides to its design as rapidly, it strikes as deadly and as deep."

"And you are come then, kind and gentle shade, to save a life so worthless as my own?"

"I never wished you ill, and do not now. Richard, if even you have valued my entreaties, refuse not to comply with this. Arise with secresy and diligence, and leave this house at once."

"Behold, I obey you on the instant, Esther. Yet stay!—"

"Hark! some one stirs!"

"The house is silent."

"Speak quickly, then, and low."

"Tell me if you are happy."

Esther sighed.

"Oh, hide not from me any thing of your condition, Esther. Tell me by what strange toils, what prayers, what sufferings, I yet may hope to meet you in a happier world. Tell me, and though you bid me to surrender all my earthly

schemes of glory, though you should bid me shake Ambition off, and cease to dream of power and wealth and honour; though you should make my path in life a waste, teach me to curb my fiery impulses; nay, though you charge me to surrender that first passion of my life since you were lost—my hate of him who was my rival in your love—I will cast all away upon the second—and be an humble, pale, poor, passionless and self-tormenting penitent, wasting my noons and nights in prayer and agony, and only living on the hope of meeting you in peace and happiness. Where dwell you, in what land, for there must be the limit of my wanderings?"

"Vain man!" said Esther, after contemplating the enthusiast for some moments with an expression of mingled pity and severity, "Mistaken man, how passion has eaten up your understanding. It is not by a motive such as this, so earth-born, so self-interested, that you can ever hope with justice to influence your fate in the hands of

Him who is to judge you. Dismiss from your remembrance all thought of these intemperate passions, to which you have sacrificed so much of your own and of others' happiness, repair the wrongs you have inflicted, redress the misery you have occasioned, dry up the tears that you have caused to flow, light up the hearths you have made dark and lonely, and do all this, not for the love of earth and earthly passions, but for the sake of virtue and its Author."

"You speak to one," said Lacy, "insensible to such a motive, insensible to all, except that one absorbing passion which has diffused itself throughout his whole existence, and become, indeed, himself. The time has long gone by when I could think so anxiously of death. Its terrors have grown stale upon my fancy, and now, my conscience seldom hurts me that way. If I cannot be virtuous for your sake, I never can be for my own."

Here the figure started slightly, as if in alarm,

and assumed for a moment the attitude of close attention.

" I must depart:" were the next words of Esther; " Farewell, delay not long beneath this roof; and oh, remember my injunctions."

" Hold!" cried Lacy, aloud, and springing suddenly to his feet, " you have not answered yet my single question."

" I cannot now."

" Ah, Esther, leave me not unsatisfied. You shall not pass!" he added, with a rapid wildness of manner, as the figure glided toward the door.

She raised her hands and laid one finger close upon her lips as if enjoining silence. Lacy obeyed the signal, but would not abandon his place between her and the door. At that moment a sudden noise in the next room made him start and look around. When he again assumed his former attitude, the apparition had fled. He saw only the shimmer of a white dress through the darkness, and in the next instant was alone.

Exhausted by the exquisite degree of excitement to which his feelings had been just wound up, he sunk down, powerless, into a chair, his arms hanging drearily to the ground, and his head depending on his shoulder. In this condition he was once more startled by the entrance of one of his men, who had occasioned the noise already mentioned. In so feverish a state the slightest appeal to an external sense acted on his frame with an electric violence. He leaped up once more from his seat, confronted the intruder, who was no other than his creature Tobin, and, finding his terror vain, burst suddenly into a passion of rage.

"Ruffian!" he said, "how dare you break so rudely on my presence? Who are you? What's your business?"

"Ha!" said the intruder, "ruffian, Mr. Lacy! That's a strange word to apply to a person of respectable connexions."

"Ah, Tobin, I knew you not."

"What is the matter, sir?"

"This house!" said Lacy, abstractedly, "what danger? from what hand?"

"I heard a noise in the room, and I thought I'd just step in to see whether you wanted anything."

"Tobin, come hither."

"Here's Tom Tobin, ever ready at a call. What's your will?"

"Who is the owner of this house?"

"A Mr. Johnson, I think; some fellow of low English extraction, I suspect. A fellow of no family. And yet 'tis such fellows that live in such little elysiums as this, while the Blakes, the O'Donnell's, the Fitzgerald's, the Butler's, the O'Shaughnessy's, the O'Tooles, the O'Lones, the O'Donoghues, the M'Carthys, the M'Gillicuddys, and all the cream and top of the old Irish nobility are scattered over the country, hedging and ditching, and tilling, as hired labourers, the lands which their ancestors won in fight, and held from

father to son at the point of the sword. But so it is :

> Since every Jack became a gentleman,
> There's many a gentle person made a jack."

"Tobin, I did not know you when you entered."

"Enough said: gentle blood is quickly up, but gentle speech will soon allay it, sir."

"I must leave this place to-night."

"To-night!"

"This very instant."

"And your hurt?"

"It is almost well. It need be no obstruction. Let us come silently and with secresy, for there is danger in the place. Away!"

Silencing the remonstrances of Tobin, Lacy pressed forward into the room where his attendants were sleeping in chairs around the fire, and waked them up with caution. Signifying his wishes rather by actions than by

words, he made them comprehend his intention of departing instantly. The servant who had received directions as to his conduct from some sufficient quarter, appeared among them at the moment, and assisted in getting their horses ready, and making all preparations for their departure. A few minutes only elasped before the echoing of their horses' hoofs had ceased to clatter along the lake and against the opposite mountain.

In returning to the house, the servant encountered his master, standing on the kitchen floor, and apparently in stifled agitation.

"Where are the strangers?" he said, in a low and subdued voice, while his eye was fixed with an expression of sternness upon that of his servant.

"They are gone, sir," said the latter.

"Who bade them go?"

"Themselves, sir, to come an' call for their horses an' be off."

Francis paused for a considerable time, as if undergoing a passionate mental struggle.

"Where's your mistress?" he asked at length.

"She is within, sir, readin' in the parlour."

"What did that gentleman say at parting?"

"Nothin' to me, sir."

"Go, go to your bed."

The servant left the place.

"It is better as it is," Francis muttered to himself, after a long pause. "I wished to have some conversation with him in his mood of suffering, but I am glad that it has happened otherwise, I could not answer for my heart when I beheld him lying in my power with all his guilt, committed and intended, hot upon him. It is better we did not meet."

CHAPTER XVIII.

About a fortnight after this event, Francis was returning late in the evening through the village of Roundwood, when a sudden and heavy descent of rain compelled him to take shelter at an inn on the right hand. There had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the house was full of guests. The light, from the windows and the open door, streamed across the street, making the rain drops sparkle as

they fell into its beams. The sound of mirth was loud within the house, and the uproar was but slightly diminished when Francis made his appearance. Wrapped in a white great coat, and with his hat drawn low upon his brow, he passed unrecognized among the crowd, and gained a distant corner, shadowed by the projecting porch of the fire-place, whence he might contemplate all the company, without incurring the observation of any.

The landlord was busy in his shop. A large fire sent light and heat through the room, and shone on many a merry countenance. On one side of the fire-place were a number of young men and girls, laughing loudly, while on the other sat a number of middle aged men, who were carrying on a graver conversation, in which, nevertheless, many appeared highly interested. The usual centre of attraction, in such scenes, a table and vessels for drink, was not forgotten here, though many

preferred to sit apart, each with his own brown fount of inspiration, and worship Bacchus in Montmellic Ale.

"No Saint Pathrick!" exclaimed one old man in a tone of surprise, while he gently moved the liquor in his pewter drinking vessel, "that's a dhroll thing."

"Why then it is," said another, "an' I heerd it, for all. I heerd Mr. Damer, over, prove it out of a book, that there was'nt such a man at all there, nor no talk of him, at the time."

"What's that you're sayin' Phil?" asked a hoarse voice from the corner.

"That Saint Pathrick was never there at all, he's sayin'," replied the old man, turning round with a smile, as if in hope of finding some successful counter-argument.

"Saint Pathrick, eroo?"

"Iss, then."

'Erna, howl."

"Faix, I'm in airnest."

"An' what's more, I believed him too," continued the retailer of the paradox, "until I was talking of it, afther, to Misther Lenigan, the Latin taicher, an' he made light of it, in a minute, for sure, says he, if there was no Saint Pathrick, what did they build the ould ruins for? an' if they were built by any body, might'nt it as well be Saint Pathrick as any body else? Eh, now, Jerry!"

"It stands to raison, what you say."

"Erra, I would'nt mind a word one o' them convarthers would be sayin' to me," said a young man who had got his arm round his sweetheart's waist, "they have arguments that would bother the Danes, an' you'd think the world could'nt gainsay what they'd tell you, an' when you'd be listenin' to the Priest, afther, before two minutes, he would'nt lave 'em worth a button. I'd rather be talkin' to Mary here, be 'r two selves, a-near the fire side, than to hear all the convarthers in Europe."

"Ayeh," said Mary, tossing his head incredulously.

"'Tis thrue, I tell you."

"Ayeh, talkin' is aisy, Jim."

"M' asthora you wor—

Your eyes, 'tis true, are a sweet sky blue,
  Your cheeks the hue of the crimson rose;
Your hair, behold, does shine like gold,
  In flowing rolls, it so nicely grows.
Your skin is white as the snow by night,
  Straight and upright is your portly frame;
The chaste Diana an' the fair Susanna,
  Are eclipsed in grandeur by my lovely dame."

"Well, it's all one," said an old flax dresser, in a corner, "these converts—"

"Perverts, you should call 'em," interrupted a new voice, which was no other than that of Lenigan, "'tisn't converted, they are, but perverted, the heavens look down upon 'em."

"Perverts, then, if it be perverts. I say there is n't one o' them but what comes round again in the latter end. When the world is slippin' away

from undher us, heaven save us, it is then the truth will break out for all."

"Its true for you," observed a smith, taking a pipe from his mouth and knocking off the ashes with the tip of his little finger, "there's that Tobin, that turned to plase Lacy, the magisthrate, he's for turnin' agáin now, to plase himself. He came to me a couple o' days ago, down to the forge, to get a nail dhruv in a loose shoe, an' I never heerd but how he talked o' Lacy. Some argument they had about money, that Tobin said was owin' to him, an' Lacy wouldn't pay it."

"Shasthone!" said the first speaker, "its a good sign for the counthry to have 'em breakin!"

"Indeed," ejaculated the smith, "that same Misther Lacy will be in a place yet where the tip of his finger will light his pipe for him, if he does'nt change his behaviour."

"He could'nt do worse, himself, than to judge you, Tom," said Lenigan, whose eye had

just began to twinkle in the corner, "not if he was a Turk."

"Why then, of all men, Davy, it does'nt become you to take his part, that knows well the way he dealt with a gentleman that was good to you once, Masther Frank Riordan."

"Don't speak of it, don't speak o' that, at all, Tom, I beg o' you."

"An' sure there's the poor Hares, that are lodged in the Bridewell this very day for night-walkin', an' that'll never get out of his hands again, until they are hung."

"The Hares in Bridewell!" exclaimed Davy, in strong surprize.

And Francis started, too, and listened in awakened interest, for in this name he recognized that of two poor fellows whom he had formerly rescued from the tyranny of Lacy. He felt a double interest in their fate, as he knew that it was his success in their cause which contributed to confirm the hatred that Lacy had conceived against

him upon other grounds. That circumstance was now nearly five years past, and he wondered at the inveteracy of spite which could seize an opportunity of vengeance after the lapse of many years.

"They were taken this morning," continued the smith, "makin' an attack upon Tobin in his house. The whole world wondhers, for there was n't quieter people goin' than the Hares, an' they tenants of Tobin, an' wantin' an abatement of him this time back. They're to be examined to-morrow at the petty sessions before Mr. Damer an' Mr. Leonard, two gentleman that'll show 'em fair play, for all bein' protestants."

"He's a terrible little man," said the flax-dresser. "They say he had a dale to do with this new Vesthry Bill act, that's come out lately."

"Aye, an' the Sub-lettin' Act," observed the old man already alluded to as the first speaker.

"Thèm two acts," said Davy, "are nothing less than, as I may say, the two jaws of a demon that are to grind away the good of Ireland into nothing, between 'em."

This vigorous sentiment set on foot a stormy debate upon those two famous pieces of legislation, which proceeded to an extreme degree of violence. Davy, as he had struck the spear into the dwelling of the tempests, so he used every exertion now to pacify the tumult he had raised. He stood up, waved his hands, looked round him with an imploring eye, but all his gestures were unheeded amid the zeal of political discussion. At length, finding that nothing in a colloquial way had the slightest chance of producing an impression, he threw himself on a sudden into an oratorical attitude, and shouted out an astounding—"Gentlemen!"—

A dead silence immediately fell upon the circle, for the voice and the sight of an or-

ator exercise upon such people an influence as powerful as that which the great Patron of the art was accustomed to use on the shores of the ancient Erebus. All eyes were turned on the speaker. All tongues were hushed, all passions quelled upon the instant; the uplifted pewter hung suspended in mid-air; the frolic swain, forgetting the kiss for which he had been struggling, looked backward over his shoulder and relaxed his hold around the person of his screaming love; the landlord hobbled, smiling, from behind his counter; the pot-boy forgot his vocation; the very dogs and cats relinquished their altercations; the expectation of that treat so precious to Irish ears, an oration, lulled every heart to silence, and mute attention sunk suddenly upon the scene.

"Gentlemen!" continued Davy, preserving the lofty oratorical key, "will ye hear a word from me upon those bloody and inhuman statutes?"

Continued silence, only interrupted by a murmur of something like assent, seemed to inform the speaker that the company were willing he should be heard.

"I am glad, gentlemen," resumed the orator, "to see by the zale ye show in your discourse that ye are roused at last from that sleepin' *liturgy* in which ye were lulled so long. Although it is nearly impossible for me to add any thing to what many other gentlemen have already said, to-night, round the table, I, for all, cannot with silence pass over the late achievements of our countrymen, without making some remarks an' observations of my own [here there was a murmur of something like approbation, in which all joined, except the smith and the other great man, the seneschal of the parish]. We surmounted the times, gentlemen, when the priest was hunted with more diligence than the ravenous wolf, an' as for the schoolmasther— [there was some tittering among the girls]—an'

as for the school-masther, he was searched for as a vigorous sportsman, on the banks of the Nore, would search for his game; an' they would be as happy, when those would have the misfortune to fall into their hands, as the dejected thraveller on the deserts of Africa when ready to expire with thirst, and would just meet a pool o' wather. [Some applause]. But, friends, for what purpose did they so diligently seek them? I will tell you! To wreak their vengeance on those necessary members of society. [Applause more decided]. The time is now past when the poor bewildered Catholic, in his state of starvation, would not be allowed to keep a horse worth more than five pounds, and when he would not be allowed to keep one foot of the land of his fore-fathers undher a lase, an' even spakin' the language of his country was a crime. [Applause.] Now, spakin' in truth, they repaled these dismal, unpolitical laws, not for any feelin' o' friendship or hu-

manity towards us, but merely to secure the pace o' the Empire, an' to remove the disgrace they reçaved in all the polished Coorts o' the known world they visited, as they looked upon them as base, savage, and unpolished people. [Energetic applause.] But, gentlemen, I have now a word or two to offer upon a subject in which every Irishman must feel an interest, I mane the state of our population. Our enemies lately enacted two statues, just intended for our destruction, the one called the Vestry Bill Act, the other the Sub-letting Act the former intended to impoverish us, the latther to stop our growing population. [Cheers.] But, friends," continued the orator, warming with his success, "will you hear to my opinion of this statue? I conçave it to be worse than that enacted by Pharoah when he commanded that the male children of the Israelites would be desthroyed, for this act, of which I speak, destroys them both male and female,

[tremendous cheering,] by preventing the honest husbandman from sharing his spot of ground with his industrious children, and that it is well known that the more the ground is cultivated the more fertile it becomes. But let them remember, the more they decrease our population, their own empire becomes more defenceless, for, let it be enquired of his Excellency the Commander in Chief, whether the Irish fought as brave as any English or Scotch throops ever undher his command in all his expeditions? [Cheers.] Let them, on that footing then, continue the sub-letting Act, if they like to become a prey to some Napoleon, or some other haro of his kind. [Cheers.] Then they will feel the fruits of their own doin's, when we will be too old to wield the swoord, an' they will have no youngsthers to enter the service. [Great cheering.] It is, then, that the sovereign of England will have to say, as his Majesty George the Second once said, when he expressed, 'Cursed be the

laws ' says he, ' that prevents my own subjects from fighting in my own service, an' secures victhory to my enemies.' With this defference, that *we* will have no youngsthers to fight in any service whatever. [Immense cheering.] As for the Vesthry Bill Act, the people that made that statue did not consider that if the ministhers o' the Church would be so base as to put it in execution, their own rents would be unpaid, an' they would in the end fall by their own doin's. But, friends, I have said enough upon the subject, as I am thresspassin' too much upon your time, [No! no! tremendous cheering.] for to recite our wrongs would cost an author, let alone me, a long life. Therefore I will conclude by telling you that the surest and most expeditious way to break all those chains, is to live paceable with those savages that daily want to raise us to rebellion, to observe the laws in the sthrictest manner, to avoid night-walkin' as the root of

all our misfortunes, and, of all the world, to beware of any secret societies, for I can assure you, with truth, that all who belong to any such community are of little consequence in any concerns, unless in violating the laws, an' going headlong to the gallows."

And, with this pointed peroration, Lenigan sat down, amid loud and long continued applause.

Soon after, as the company became more mirthful, Apollo was invoked to give additional grace to an evening which had been already brightened by Mercury and cheered by Bacchus and Cytherea. In humbler phrase, several songs were sung, the greater number of which owed their principal fascination to a political or controversial meaning hidden beneath the apparent sense. Sometimes a fellow sung the adventures of a mouse, which was sent off from Ireland to the British senate, where

The Nobles all, both great and small, did wonder much to see
A mouse so small from Ireland, seeking for liberty.
There was a cat within that house, an' to the mouse did say,
' I doubt you are a stranger, I believe you're goin' asthray.
' I think you are a paddy mouse, an' when did you come o'er ?'
' This mornin', sir,' replied the mouse, ' I landed on your shore.
' An' if I am a paddy mouse,' the mouse to him did say,
' I doubt you are a buckish cat, an' I'm not goin' asthray.
' For I'm a son to Graunia, that sore laments for grief,
' An' she sent me to his Majesty, to grant her some relief.

And then the company were favoured with "The lamentation and gaol groans of Jeremiah Hayes, for the murder of Ann M'Loughlin;" "A new and much admired song on this present Parliament, and rising prosperity of Ireland;" "Shauna Grien's meeting with Graunia;" and other melodies equally significant in their apprehension.

"Come, Misther Davy," said the young foe to all 'convarthers,' "give us somethin' sportin' now. 'Tis you that can sing a good song, you know, when you have a mind."

"Erra, howl."

"Faix you can."

"Do, Misther Davy," said the smith, "if it is'nt makin' too bould to throuble you."

"No offence; oh, no offence in life, Tom; but I declare I'm smothered from a great cold in my throat this time back."

"Ayeh, that's the way always with the fine songsthers."

"Faix, it is'nt o' purpose I speak; but I'm sure I'll do my best, an' what can I do more?"

"'T would be hard to ax you."

"Were obleast to you, Misther Davy."

"I'll sing you a song, then," said Davy, suddenly throwing off his reluctance, "about a set o' people that's very desarvin' for industhry, an' that's the Peelers. For what would the counthry do at all, if it was'nt for 'em? 'Tis they that airn their money well. There isn't a mouse can squeak; there isn't a calf can blate; there isn't a hen can clock a-near 'em, but they must know what raison! I'll engage there's few pigs

unring'd, or goats unspancelled, since they come in the counthry; an' I'm sure there's nobody that saw the state o' the high roads but will allow that there was no ho with the pigs until the Peelers come into the barony."

And with this encomiastic prelude, Lenigan launched out into his song:

I.

A Banshee Peeler went one day on duty an' pathrollin', O,
He met a Goat upon the road, who seem'd to be a sthrollin', O,
Bayonet fixed, he sallied forth, an' caught him by the weazand, O
An' thundered out an oath that he would send him to New
[Zealand O.

II.

Mercy, sir, exclaimed the Goat, pray let me tell my story, O;
I'm not a thief, a ribbon-man, a croppy, whig, or tory, O;
Banshee is my dwelling place, where I was bred an' born, O,
Descended from an honest race, its all the thrades I larned, O.

III.

It is in vain for to complain, or give your tongue such bridle, O.
You're absent from your dwelling place, disordherly an' idle, O.
Your hoary locks will not prevail, nor your sublime oration, O;
You'll be thransported by Peel's Act, upon my information, O.

IV.

Let the consequence be what it will, a Peeler's power I'll let you know.
I'll handcuff you at all events, an' march you off to prison, O.
You villain, you cannot deny, before the judge or jury, O,
On you I found two pointed spears a threat'nin' me with fury, O.

V.

I'm certain, if you were not drunk from whiskey, rum, or brandy, O,
You would not have such gallant spunk, to be so bold an' manly, O.
Ah, says the Goat, you'd let me pass, if I had got the brandy, O,
To thrate you to a sportin' glass, it's then I'd be the Dandy O.

This satire, extravagant as it was, upon a hated race, was received by the hearers with a degree of enthusiasm which it is difficult to represent in language. Shouts of bitter laughter, and execrations sent forth between the clenched teeth, showed plainly what a popular subject the satirist had chosen for his target, and how well the singer knew his audience.

Love-songs there were, the eternal burthen of which was inconstancy and woe. The gay and light-winged Cupid, who laughs, and waves his

pinions with such a joyous levity around the lyre of the national lyrist, was here the very same in sentiment, but floating on a coarser plumage, and with the evil-spirit not so well concealed.

The rain however had now abated, and Francis had left the house, with the intention of adopting some mode of rescue for his ancient clients, though none as yet appeared consistent with his own safety. As he put his horse to a gentle trot, the bursts of wild applause came frequent after, and between, the voice of a young girl who had been prevailed upon, all bashful and unwilling as she was, to delight the ears of the company with the song of the Green Bushes:

I'll buy you fine beavers, a fine silken gownd,
I'll buy you fine petticoats flounc'd to the ground,
If you will prove loyal and constant to me,
An' forsake your own true-love an' marry with me.

I want none of your beavers, nor silken hose
For I ne'er was so poor as to marry for clothes,
But if you'll prove loyal and constant to me
I'll forsake my own true love an' marry with thee.

Come, let us be going, kind Sir, if you please,
Come, let us be going from undher these threes,
For yonder he's coming, my true-love I see,
Down by the Green bushes, where he thinks to meet me.

When her true-love come there, an' he seen she was flown,
Oh, he stood like some lambkin, that bleats all alone:
She is flown with another, and forsaken me!
Oh, adieu the Green bushes for ever! said he.

CHAPTER XIX.

As he rode homeward in the dark, within a few miles of his own residence, he was hailed by a figure on the road side, which, on nearer approach, he distinguished to be that of a young woman. She waved her hand anxiously several times, and seemed impatient for his approach.

"Is that you, docthor?" she said, as he came nearer, "Hurry in, hurry in, an' the heavens bless you! You never will overtake him alive."

"Whom, woman?"

"Did'nt James tell you, sir? A man of Misther Lacy's, that was servin' a process in the mountains, an' a poor man that was in the place had the misfortune of killing him."

"A man of Lacy's?" exclaimed Riordan, "bring me into the house immediately. I am no doctor, my good woman, so lose no time in sending for one, if you think it necessary."

He dismounted, and led his horse along a narrow bridle road, following the steps of the woman, who trudged along with the tail of her gown turned up over her shoulders, giving him at the same time an account of the accident which had taken place.

"He was a very foolish man," said she; "it was only this morning he took up two boys o' the Hares for night-walkin', an' nothin' could do him afther, but to go into the mountain to serve a process upon one Naughtin, a first cousin of their own. 'M sure what could

he expect? They gathered about him, and one of 'em knocked him down, and another made him go upon his knees, and ate the process, an' swally it, an' take a dhrink o' wather afther to wash it down; an', afther that, he got a blow of a stone, from somebody or another, that desstroyed his head, an' indeed I'm afeerd he never 'll do. Ah, sir, 'tis a frightful thing to see a man in that state when he is'nt aizy in his mind! I wished he had the priest, poor creature, for he's one o' them that *turned*, an' I declare I feel for him."

They reached the cottage, which was crowded with the country people. The wounded man was lying in an inner room, which, likewise, was thronged as full as it could hold. Looking over the shoulders of the crowd, Francis could just discern the bed on which the unfortunate wretch was laid, and around which a number of faces were gathered, some wearing an expression of compassion, but by far the greater number

evincing either simple curiosity or a grim satisfaction. The light of a small candle, the end of which was crushed against the wall for the want of a better candlestick, threw a dead and perplexing light upon the group.

" Is the doctor come?" said the wounded man, in a tone of deep suffering, " is there no compassionate soul here that would get me a docthor, to see am I to die or to live?"

" He's sent for," said an old woman, " he'll be here immediately."

" The Lord forgive you!" said another, " many's the time you made work for the docthors yourself, before now, an' the surgeons, an' the undhertakers too."

" The Lord forgive you!" said a third, " the second year is'nt gone by since you swore away the life of my poor husband for nothing, and left me this way in rags, an' my children fatherless, an' houseless, an' apprenticed in their youth to beggary!"

"Oh, let the Lord forgive you, if he can!" exclaimed a fourth. "I had two brothers, as strong and handsome as were ever seen at fair or market place. One of them is lying in the Croppy-hole, this year, and another is in the wilds of New South Wales; and it is you I have to thank for that, and for my misery."

The wounded man regarded each of his accusers, as they came forward and retired, with a smile of grim and calm defiance, nor did he appear in the slightest degree affected by the charges which they launched against him in his agony.

"I do not ask the Almighty to forgive him," screamed a withered creature on the right of Francis—"I had but the one—I had but the one alone—an' that villain came across him an' desthroyed me! He left me childless—may the Lord remember it to him in his own time! He left the widow's hearth-stone cold—may the Lord make a widow of his wife, and orphans of his own this night."

Again a grim smile of defiance crossed the pale face of the sufferer, and showed that even this imprecation had fallen harmless on his sleeping conscience.

" Shame! shame!" said Francis, "if any thing could move you to forgiveness, it ought to be the condition of the poor man who is suffering before you."

" Dont speak to me, sir," exclaimed the woman, "I know you well, masther Francis, I know you are our friend, but I know, likewise, what I had, an' how I lost it. I can't forgive him for my child's desthruction!—I tell you it is an ease to me to see his blood, an' a joy to my heart to hear him groanin' with the anguish. An' see, if there isn't another come to ask for blood of her own at his hands. The mother of the Hares is come to see you in your trouble," she added, turning her face towards the bed.

At the same time, the crowd separated without, so as to allow the entrance of a

stranger, who presented an appearance somewhat superior to the people by whom she was surrounded. She was dressed in deep mourning stuff, with a widow's cap on her head, and a cloth scapulary, of the order of the Blessed Virgin, around her neck. Although her countenance bore the traces of recent affliction, yet there was a habitual calmness in her eyes, and around her mouth, which gave an appearance of serenity and even sweetness to the figure.

She walked to the bed-side of the patient, and after pausing for a few moments in the attitude of one who endeavours to outweary rather than wrestle with a deep and agitating passion, she said to the byestanders in her native tongue:

"This man, who lies here, once professed the same faith and knelt at the same altar that we do ourselves. He deserted his creed, and to those who asked him wherefore he had done so, he replied, that he had discovered many errors in our doctrine, and that the worship which he

offered up in his present creed was of a purer and loftier nature than he had ever used in ours. I appeal to you, my friends and neighbours, whether the course of his apparent life, since the day of his change, has been such as to justify the supposition of an improvement in his principles? Ah, say not that I judge him, when I answer, No! The blood of our fair, our young, our virtuous, and our noble-hearted, give back the judgment, and not I. This morning, he made me feel for myself as I had often felt for others who had fallen into his power—he robbed me of my two children, and I tremble for their blood, for innocence is not a safe-guard in the grasp of Lacy. Yet let this deserter of our faith behold the influence of that doctrine which he has cast from him and reviled. Behold!" she continued, untying the strings of her widow's cap and uncovering a head of hair half silvered over by the touch of age; "I make my head bare, in the presence of Him who is to

judge us both, but do not tremble, murderer though you be, for I come to give you, not the mother's and the widow's curse, but the mother's pardon in your dying hour. I forgive you for my lonely hearth, for the fearful days that I have passed, for the heart-aches and the pangs I feel this moment. Go to your Maker, if he call upon you, and tell him that Mary Hare has washed the blood of her children from your hands, and oh! may he deal lightly with you, for the stains that many a broken heart beside has left there! I know not how these guiltless men may thrive, the times have taught me to expect the worst, but let their fate be what it may, I say, again, their mother pardons you, their mother gives you her forgiveness and her prayers."

Without waiting any reply, the woman at these words glided out of the room, leaving the company impressed with a strange and solemn feeling, such as the novelty of such a

scene was calculated to excite. It was difficult to observe whether it produced any effect upon the wounded man, for his countenance scarcely changed, and his position remained unaltered, but he did not receive it in the same spirit of calm and steady hate which he had evinced amid the execrations which preceded it.

"I heard a voice, while ago," said the sick man, "that I would wish to hear again. If there be a gentleman in this room who will receive a dying man's last wishes, I will thank him to draw near me."

With some difficulty Francis succeeded in getting the apartment cleared, and after closing the door, and throwing in the bolt, he took a chair near the bed. The sick man turned on him a ghastly and wandering eye, and then sunk back, as if his suspicions had been fully justified:

"You seem to know me?" said Francis.

"I do," replied the other, faintly, "and I think it a sign of grace from Heaven that you have come to me at this moment, for that woman's *shanachus* was troubling my mind, and I longed to ease my soul of one offence at least before I die. I would'nt have minded to the last the barking of those cabin curs that snarled where they dared not bite, but bloody as my hands have been, there's something of the gentleman about my heart, and the forbearance of that widowed wretch struck through it. I should not like to meet the Hares before a different court from that which I intended."

"You may make some reparation," said Francis, "by revealing all you know of them to me, and doing what you can to further the ends of justice before you go."

The patient smiled at this, as at a very simple speech. "They call you bright," he said, but I think you ought to know more of human

nature than to think that any persuasions of your's could induce me to say more than this;" he pointed with his finger to the wound.—"I hope," he added after a pause, "I hope my cousins will take care that I have a decent funeral. My father's covered a mile o' the road. I am not so well liked in the counthry, but may be when I'm dead they'd forget that for me, in compliment to the family."

"Were you not rash," said Riordan, "to venture, unguarded, into the mountains?"

"Aye," said the other, quickly, "there's the point. I have been sacrificed. Lacy took home the Police as soon as I had lodged the Hares in goal, and would not lend a man on any account. He knew that they were bent on my destruction, for so my very murderer told me, and he was glad of it, for he was done with me, and he wished to be quit of the reward he promised me. And so he sent me, like Uriah to the battle, and so I fell. Ah,

Owen, cousin Owen. I wonder if your death-bed will be like mine. Bid Owen pray for me, when you shall see him."

"And Lacy, then, betrayed you?"

"And seeks your life, too; look to it, I warn you. This doctor will never see me alive. The Hares are innocent. Have you a pencil here?"

"I have," said Francis taking out a pocket book.

"Then take my declaration while I am able to speak it."

He revealed the entire of an atrocious conspiracy formed upon the lives of the men in question, which Francis copied carefully, and treasured up against the examination on the following morning.

"If this be not my death-wound, as I fear it is," said the sick man, "I will make an effort to be upon the spot myself. But if it should be otherwise, remember what I have

told you, look to yourself!—I heard you take my part against that vengeful hag, and even though you had not, I owe a deep revenge to Lacy, and you are so far lucky, that I save your life to spite him. Ah, I am very weak. You saved the Hares once, do not neglect them now. I hope my cousins will not grudge a little expense upon my funeral, I could wish that Dick were there, but I suppose he is too great a man to think of it. If Bill could take it in hand, I'm sure it would be tasty, but where's the use o' talking?"

Doctor Jervas now arrived, to make an examination, and Francis departed, promising to call again in the morning, on his way to the sessions-house; and leaving Tobin to the mercy of the country people, some of whom exerted themselves to draw from him some intimation of the probable fate of the Hares; while others exhorted him to look into the state of his unhappy soul, and to make a last

reparation for the scandal he had occasioned by returning to the bosom of the faith he had forsaken. Otherwise, the plainest hints were thrown out, with respect to his approaching destiny, and the most cogent arguments adduced in support of the doctrines of that ancient Church, which in the words of a rural bard :

> For fifteen hundred years,
> As plainly doth appear,
> Continued quite free from molestation,
> Till woful heresy
> And infidelity
> Prevailed for to raise disconsolation.

But the medical attendant cut short the controversy, and turned all the polemics out of the room, leaving the renegade to his own reflections, and entrusting the task of his conversion to the less boisterous, but more persuasive, reasoner within his bosom.

CHAPTER XIX.

The fate of the brothers had excited a strong interest throughout the district. Accordingly, at an early hour on the following morning, a considerable number of the country people had collected around the neighbouring court of petty sessions. Davy was there, and had the satisfaction, while they waited the arrival of the magistrates, of overwhelming Aaron Shepherd with a host of arguments partly

original, partly deduced from the Profession of Faith made by Pope Pius the fourth, the Fifty Reasons of the Duke of Brunswick for embracing the Catholic faith, and various other sources.

Francis Riordan left his home, on this morning, with feelings of no common pain. Uncertain what the issue might be of his publicly appearing in defence of those suspected persons, with the recollection of his own imputed trespasses still hanging out against him, he paused a moment ere he left his home. He stole back again into Esther's chamber, stooped down and kissed her, sleeping, and then departed without farther hesitation.

"It may be," he said, "that this vindictive wretch may make his menace good against my life—but what of that? I was taught in childhood to place my country foremost amongst my affections, and I hope a few months' rest and quiet happiness have not unfitted me for practising the lesson."

Richard Lacy expected the arrival of this important morning with very different sensations. After returning on the previous evening, from one of his daily excursions, he was seen pacing up and down before the hall-door of his house, as if in anxious expectation of some messenger. The rain began to descend, and he was compelled, after having endured the shower for many minutes in encreasing anxiety, to continue his vigil in the parlour.

He rang the bell many times, and enquired for different members of his household, who were absent on business. At length, a horseman rode into the yard, and hurried up the stairs, like one acquainted with the impatient disposition of his master. Lacy, while his lips quivered with eagerness, made an effort to appear tranquil and indifferent while he asked the question:

"Well, Switzer, where is Tobin?"

"Dead, sir," answered the policeman, closing his lips hard.

"Dead!" echoed Lacy, starting back with a look and action of feigned concern and ill concealed delight. "Is it certain, Switzer?"

"I saw him down myself," replied the man, "I saw him in the hands of bitter enemies."

"Those murderous dogs!" said Lacy, "thus do we lose our most valuable friends, day after day, amongst them. We must be early at the Court to-morrow, and see those ruffians done for. Get down and eat. Poor Tobin! I will speak with you, before I go to bed, again. At present, I am not easy in my mind, I have much to think of."

The man bowed, and left the room without speaking. Lacy remained pacing up and down rapidly for some moments, unwilling to acknowledge, even to his own mind, the murderous ecstacy he felt at being rid of so dangerous and insecure a counsellor as Tobin.

"Let him rest in peace!" he said at length aloud, "and let me think of him no more. I have the Hares to deal with. I hate them, for the shadow of that fiend has been upon them and hid them from the search of my revenge. Alive or dead, their fate will spite him sorely, and I have now the means to make it certain."

Having completed all his arrangements for the approaching morn, he flung himself upon his bed, and took such rest as usually haunts the pillows of the impassioned and the guilty.

The interior of the petty sessions house, at an early hour on the following morning, was occupied by nearly the same actors as those who appeared upon the scene in the first chapter of our tale. On a bench at one end of a deal table, sat Mr. Damer and his friend Mr. Leonard, nothing altered in appearance or condition by the lapse of the intervening months. The door was still closed, and a clerk sat at the end of the

table, busy in preparing his books and too far apart to hear the conversation which was passing between the two Magistrates.

"Well," said Mr. Leonard, "now that I have asked after the condition of your other stock, your horses and your kine, will you tell me how you find your neophytes? Has the murrain of Popery got amongst them once again?"

"I don't know how it is," replied his friend, with an embarrassed smile, "there is less gratitude, or less sincerity, amongst them than I believed."

"I know it well," returned Mr. Leonard, "the priest has coaxed them all back again, has he not?"

"And people so convinced, so thoroughly convinced, as they appeared to be!"

"Convinced of what?"

"Why, of the errors of their creed. They saw, as plainly as I could desire, the excessive folly of many of their ecclesiastical ceremonies, and the profaneness of their subordinate articles of faith."

"Aye, but you know that was in spring, and it is autumn now."

"Well, why should a man's eyes be more open before summer than after?"

"Because potatoes were thirty shillings a barrel in spring, whereas now they may be had for five."

Some other magistrates, dropping in at this moment, cut short the dialogue, and the conversation became more general.

"Well, Dickson," said Mr. Leonard, "so you won't allow me to make that little road to the village?"

"I cannot consent to it, sir," returned the gentleman so addressed, with a grave look "I think the road is not wanted, and besides, Mr. Leonard, I thought you knew my principles. I am a tory, sir."

"Well, Mr. Evans, *you're* a whig. May I count on *your* voice?"

"Oh, certainly, Leonard, you may. But

then I must have yours in another matter of the kind that I shall speak to you about another time."

"You may count upon it, Evans; provided you fling no job upon my hands."

"Job! oh, fie! fie!"

The crowd were now admitted, and several cases were dispatched, while they awaited the arrival of Lacy, as the accuser of the Hares. Some processes were issued, to recover for a smith the price of a new spade; for a weaver, the worth of a piece of bandle linen; or for a village carpenter, the cost of some repairs in instruments of husbandry. Then came the dire account of trespasses and offences. A policeman, with a long paper in his hand, containing a list of parochial grievances, appeared at the right hand side of the clerk, prepared with law and evidence

> —t' impeach a broken hedge,
> And pigs unring'd at *vis franc.* pledge;
> Tell who did play at games unlawful,
> And who filled pots of ale but half full.

Complaints were made of, and fines inflicted on, the barefooted proprietors of goats and pigs found trespassing upon the highway, notwithstanding all that human eloquence and ingenuity could do on their behalf. Penalties were imposed on publicans, for vending whiskey at illegal times, and sundry other nibblers of justice were reproved for their audacity.

But in the midst of those affairs of lesser interest, a general murmur of dislike, and hatred ill subdued, announced the arrival of some unpopular individual. The people in the sessions-house judged that it was Lacy, and so it was. The village Sejanus entered pale, and cadaverous with anxiety, while his round, full, sparkling eyes, glanced rapidly in all directions, to ascertain what difficulties he might have to encounter in the approaching effort. They alighted with some appearance of dissatisfaction upon the form of Mr. Leonard, but yet the concern of Lacy at

his presence was not considerable, for his talent was not sufficient to render him a very formidable opponent.

The Hares, two decent looking countrymen, with a remarkable family likeness of each other, were then summoned to the end of the table, and Lacy stood up to make his charge against them, and to produce his informations. The accusation which he made was briefly as follows :

These two brothers were, he said, his own tenants. They had been long applying to him for an abatement in their rent, which he had constantly refused. At length, he received an intimation, from a person in his employment, named Tobin, that these two men, in company with several others, meditated an attack upon his house, with the view of compelling him to enter into the terms which they desired. Their rendezvous was at a ruined castle within a few hundred paces of his residence, and he was

also made aware of the night on which the project was to be put in execution. Accordingly, he took care to be upon his guard, and lay hid within the ruin until the party should appear. The two prisoners now before the magistrates were the two who first appeared, and they were instantly secured, and without much eclat. Some unknown circumstance, however, had occasioned the remainder of the party to take alarm, and they did not appear at the place of appointment. Tobin was now dead, fallen a victim, doubtless, to his zeal upon this very occasion, but Lacy had still enough of evidence to make his allegations good. He had the policemen who assisted in their apprehension, and he had a threatening notice in the hand-writing of the elder Hare, which was nailed upon his gate, and the purport of which was, that he must either make up his mind to comply with the reasonable demands of his tenants, or else prepare his coffin.

These facts were proved by the policemen and others, and the threatening notice was handed in, and examined by the magistrates. The identity of the handwriting was proved by several witnesses.

When the Hares were called upon for their defence, a very fat and short-armed little man arose. His dress was rather threadbare; his eye affectedly subtle; and his mouth had got a habitual twist to one side, from the custom of speaking apart, inside his palm, to counsel and others, in presence of the Court. He affected some smart attitudes, in mimicry of lawyers at the bar, darted his eyes knowingly on both sides, and whispered a moment with the elder Hare. He then stood up, nodded significantly two or three times, and prepared to address the magistrates.

"I ask pardon," said Lacy, rising, with a smile, "but I think this gentleman is an attorney?"

" Yes, I am *concerned** for the prisoners," replied the legal minnow.

" Then," rejoined Lacy, " it behoves the magistrates to stay a proceeding so much out of course. It is already decided, by many precedents, that a prisoner cannot be heard by attorney on his examination before a magistrate."

The attorney replied, quoted, looked angry, railed and bullied, but Lacy overwhelmed him with precedents, and he was compelled to retire, uttering a storm of censures and menaces.

" Oh, murther," said the younger Hare, "arn't we to have the law, either? Well, Mr. O 'Twist, you wont keep our three and ninepence,† Sir, as you can't be of any use to us ?"

He was answered by a storm of abuse; the fat lawyer protesting that he had sacrificed three other clients to his anxiety on behalf of this pair of

* Employed on their behalf.

† The customary fee of those attornies who practice at Courts.

ingrates. And saying this, and brushing his hat furiously round with the cuff of his coat, he clapped it down upon his head, and left the court, looking like a man who had been very ill used.

The elder Hare was then called on by Mr. Leonard, to deliver, in his own manner, an account of the transaction. The man, who was an intelligent looking person, approached the table with some anxiety of manner, and yet with an apparent consciousness of right, which excited a considerable degree of interest in his favour.

"Please your worship," he said, "Mr. Lacy, I know, is a well-spoken gentleman, and 'tis little use it will be for me, now that my attorney is gone, to take it in hand to gainsay what he advanced; but still I'll thry my endayvours. It was I wrote that notice, surely, an' it was I, an' no one else, that nailed it on the gate; an' I'll tell you why I done so. This Tobin, that they say is dead now, come to me one day and asked me if I'd like

to have my rent of my little farm abated?—I told him I would, why not? for it was that I was asking Mr. Lacy for, ever an' always. Because, says Tobin, Mr. Lacy wants to get an abatement himself from the head landlord, an' all he requires is just an excuse for lowering the rent to you. So says he, it would be a good plan if you an' your brother (manin' this boy here a near me), an' one or two more, would get together some night, an' post a threatenin' notice upon the gate, an', afther that, to come some night an' make an attack, by way of a feint, upon the house, an' give him an excuse for saying his life was in danger on account o' the rent. We did his biddin', an' we fell into the snare they laid. Tobin set the crib to catch us, and now Mr. Lacy comes to put the *goulogue** upon our necks."

A murmur of suppressed indignation passed among the listeners, as the man concluded, but

* A forked stick, used to secure birds taken in a crib in winter.

Lacy regarded him with a smile of calm reproof and pity.

"It is very well," said he, "the case is stated with very great precision. It only remains to be seen in evidence that all this is not a fabrication."

"Have you the necessary proofs of this, Hare?" asked Mr. Leonard.

"Sure here's my brother that was by, the whole time while Tobin was talking to me."

"I'll take the vestment of it," said the brother.

"My good fellow," said Damer, while they were smiling at the man's simplicity, "your brother lies implicated in the same accusation that lies against yourself, and his testimony can avail you nothing. Have you no other evidence?"

"Have you no person to produce who was present at those conversations with Tobin, besides your brother?"

"There was nobody by, exceptin' myself an' Thade," replied the prisoner.

"You have no witness, then?" asked Leonard in a tone of commiseration.

"No witness," said the man, falling into a desponding attitude.

"No witness," cried Lacy, starting up with the rapid action of one who is hurried on by sudden passion. "No witness! and behold him standing there with the black libel yet upon his lips, baffled in the vilest calumny that hate and disappointment ever hatched. He has no witness! not even among his gang of perjured accomplices can he find one so impudent as to support him in that shameless falsehood. This is the fate of loyal gentlemen in times like these. I have wrenched the dagger from the assassin's hand, and he strives to stab me with his tongue. He has no witness——"

"Yes," cried a voice from the crowd, "he has one."

Lacy paused, his hand still clenched, outstretched, and his forehead gathered into the frown of denunciation, while an individual made his way through the throng, and came forward to the table. The stranger was wrapt in a travelling cloak, and his hat, whether by accident or affectation, was brought low upon his brow.

"I can give evidence," he said in a low voice, "in favour of the prisoners."

"And your name, sir?" asked Mr. Leonard.

The stranger paused a moment, lowered his face, pressed his hand upon his brow, and seemed to be debating with himself a point of vital consequence. At length he raised his person, and said, in the same subdued voice:

"My name is Riordan, Francis Riordan."

"It is! I knew it!" cried Lacy, now for the first time springing from that attitude

in which he had been interrupted, into one of more ecstatic energy.—" I knew the rebel under his disguise. 'Tis his accomplice and his old protector! Up, gentlemen, if you are loyal men, and see that traitor handcuffed."

" Hold!" cried Riordan, gently raising one hand, and putting back with the other the hat which had in part concealed his features. " It is true; my name is Riordan, as I said, and I am this man's friend. I have proved it well this morning. But there is no occasion for the violence which Mr. Lacy recommends. I am come here to deliver myself into the hands of these gentlemen, who will no doubt see justice fully done without that stormy zeal which he deems necessary."

" It shall be done!" said Lacy, fiercely.

" It shall!" echoed Francis, " to your perfect satisfaction. Aye, Lacy, you shall have it brimming full.—You have laid treason at my door, and I will point it out lurking behind

your own. You have called me rebel, falsely called me so, but I will make the same charge good against yourself, by evidence as palpable as matter. A double rebel, false to your king, and darkly, covertly false to the hand that makes you what you are. That man's defence is true and literal," he added, handing over a paper to the magistrates. "I have it from the lips of Lacy's own accomplice, the betrayed, the deserted Tobin. There is his declaration."

It was read aloud, and Lacy employed the respite thus afforded him in spinning a new clue to free himself from the labyrinth in which he became so unexpectedly entangled.

"The calumny," he said, "is strongly built, and shows fairly, on the face, but there is still a flaw in the foundation. What proof is there that this is Tobin's writing?"

"My oath—A hundred oaths."

"Aye, oaths enough! They are now as

plentiful as western winds. The word of Heaven is now sent far and wide, throughout this kingdom, but it is only used to multiply the opportunities of perjury. For this, good men have met, and holy men have prayed, for this the wealth of Britain melts down before the feet of her apostles; that they may be reviled and mocked, and that falsehood and treason may need no means to give assurance to their calumnies. Such are the oaths that you can tender us, and such are the oaths against which the whole course of a life of undeviating loyalty gives feeble and unavailing testimony."

"One oath at least, I have," replied the witness calmly, "which even you cannot impeach."

"Even there, even with that precious gem of perjury to decorate your falsehood, you still are foiled and baffled. This is not Tobin's dying declaration."

"How?"

"The law declares that documental testimony is only admissible when the witness has supplied it under the firm belief that life was on the wing. What proof have we of this?"

"Is the law so merciful?" said Francis, turning to the magistrates with an appealing look, and a smile of mingled satisfaction and surprize.

"Consult the statutes, consult Philips, consult Macnally, gentlemen," cried Lacy, with a triumph flashing in the eyes.

"The document is worthless," murmured Riordan, "I have no proof; I do not know, myself, that Tobin had resigned all hope of life."

"And this, then," exclaimed Lacy, with a satisfaction ill concealed by the show of indignation he thought it useful to assume—"this is the sum of all that mass of evidence

which was meant to overwhelm my character, and sink the brand of treason into my door!"

"Not all," said Riordan, "I have yet one witness left. Tobin," he cried, "come forward!"

The crowd was again in motion, and Lacy shrunk back as if a lightning-flash had crossed him. Supported by a countryman, pale-faced and feeble, with a kerchief bound about his battered head, Tobin came forward trembling to the table. Had he been visibly summoned from the grave, with all its funeral suits and trappings wrapt around him, he could not have appalled the heart of Lacy with a shock of deeper terror and despair. He remained set in the attitude of sudden fear, and stared hard, as if in presence of a supernatural appearance.

"Yes!" exclaimed Riordan, pointing to the wounded man, and gazing fixedly on his persecutor; "there is the witness whose testimony I said even you could not impeach, for his was

the evidence which you have most employed against the lives and fortunes of your fellow-countrymen. His oath will make that declaration good, and the cloke shall be torn from your raw designs, and you shall be unmasked to the world for the subtle rebel, and the double traitor that you are."

"For one who boasts of right upon his side," muttered Lacy, with a ghastly sneer, "you are vehement enough."

"I am! I love to lay the blow home on such a back as yours," said Riordan warmly. "Were you only foolish, I could be content to laugh at you; were you only malicious, I might be satisfied to despise you; were you only ignorant of good, it might content me to avoid you; but when I see that ignorance, that folly, and that malice united in one dark and subtle heart, its owner becomes a subject for the lash, and that lash I will never spare to such as you, while I have a hand to lay it on."

" You say well," said Lacy, seizing the ad vantage which Riordan's vehemence afforded him, " and I might fear you too, if rant could strengthen falsehood."

" Liar, and hangman as you are!" cried the young soldier, wholly abandoning his self-command, " leave law to those who love it. Come out, and give me the satisfaction of a gentleman with the weapon of a soldier. Come out, and meet me on the level field, if old defeats have not made a coward of you! I say, come out, and make that saying good upon me, if ye dare!"

The grim and eager smile with which his enemy regarded him, showed with what a horrid rapture he would have answered the summons, if deeper interests had not prevented him. The energy of voice, and look, and action, on both sides, was so terrific, that it was some time before even the magistrates, armed with all the influence of authority, would venture to interfere

between the hostile spirits. But they did at length interpose, and were obeyed.

"Another time," said Lacy.

"Another time, then," echoed Riordan. "Meanwhile the witness waits."

"Pardon me," said Lacy, addressing himself to the magistrates, "I have a word or two to offer. It was told me last night that Tobin was murdered in the hills, and I was so convinced of his death, that I have seldom felt a more singular astonishment than his sudden re-appearance at that table excited. I regretted his loss extremely, for he was a useful friend, and I owed him much which I longed to repay; I grieved that I had not sooner acquitted myself of obligations which he had long before laid on me. [These words were accompanied by a covert glance at the witness, which was withdrawn the instant the speaker saw that it was understood.] I have now to solicit that these prisoners be remanded, and that the examination be deferred

for one night; a request which I think cannot appear extraordinary, considering the new turn that affairs have taken."

To this request, apparently so reasonable, Francis could offer no objection, without incurring the reproach of virulence, and it was acceded to without farther question. The prisoners were remanded; and Lacy was then asked what he had to adduce against Riordan that might touch his personal liberty? So downcast was he by the resurrection of his victim, and perplexed by his own embarrassed situation, that he could offer no accusation whatever.

"At present," said he, "I have not my evidence prepared. I will say more hereafter."

"Then you have no objection," said Leonard, "to his being abroad to-night upon his own recognizances?"

"None," muttered Lacy, in a sullen

tone. And his only relief was in the look of disappointed hate and malice which he sent after his successful enemy, as he left the sessions house.

CHAPTER XX.

The next morning, when Francis arrived at the sessions house, he found that the affair had taken a still stranger turn than before. Lacy did not appear: he was confined to his house by illness, and Tobin seemed to have undergone the influence of some magician in the night. He had lost all recollection of the document which he had furnished to Francis Riordan, and he was unable to supply any evidence whatever respecting the conspiracy which was yesterday alleged

with so much perseverance. No reason could be discovered for this change of sentiment, and no remedy was to be found.

Neither was there any effort made to renew the ancient charge against young Riordan. He remained at liberty, and received one or two significant hints from Mr. Leonard that there was little fear of any attempt being made to place it under any restriction.

The conduct of the prisoners, his protegés, likewise seemed extraordinary in the eyes of Francis. They seemed perfectly contented with their situation and not in the least dismayed when fully committed for trial. One of them, who saw him look uneasy and surprized, told him that he need not feel the least alarm upon their account, though he could not at that moment let him know the cause of the security he felt. The mystery was cleared however, at the following assizes, whore both the brothers were discharged for want of a prosecutor.

The reader may, without any effort at detail on the part of the historian, imagine all the consternation and delight with which Esther was once more received amongst her friends. It consoled her uncle for the failure of his cherished schemes of religious amelioration in the cabins, and old Aaron for the defeat which he had sustained at the hands of Davy Lenigan.

From that time forward, the habits, the character and the health of Lacy, seemed to have undergone a singular alteration. His enmity, his love, and his ambition, appeared to have been all together blasted. He appeared but little in public, and the virulence of his animosity against his humble neighbours was observed to soften and abate by slow degrees. In a few months, his name was seldom heard in courts of justice, was seldom seen at the head of committals in the public prints, and at length sounded in the ears of those who heard it, like that of one departed from the world. There was a mixture of

kindliness and pity in the tone with which his name was mentioned among cottage circles, which, more than all besides, demonstrated the alteration which had taken place in Lacy's character.

It was with a feeling of sincere concern and pity, likewise, that Fsther learned, in some months after, that her disappointed admirer was dangerously ill, and supposed, indeed, to have already reached a hopeless stage in his disease. She was seated at table, when the account arrived, and it affected her deeply and visibly; for she well knew that, whatever Lacy had been to others, he had always loved her with a deeper and a truer passion than men so evil minded generally feel.

From day to day the accounts became more alarming, and, at length, a messenger, sent specially by Francis, for the purpose of enquiring into the condition of the sufferer, returned with astonishment upon his countenance to say that Mr. Lacy, though unable to leave his room for two days before, had suddenly disappeared from

amongst his attendants, and fled, no one knew whither.

Disturbed by this intelligence, Esther arose and walked out into the air, while Francis mounted his horse, and rode across the mountains to offer whatever assistance lay within his power.

The evening was calm, and Esther sat to enjoy it in a rustic seat, placed in a corner of the solitary mountain recess in which Lough B——— was situated. Before her lay the lake, a still and dark expanse, crossed by a few broad gleams of light from the western extremity. On the opposite side, a solemn precipice sunk suddenly upon the level water, its sides rugged with granite, intertangled with stunted shrubs, its forehead bald and frowning, and its foot slippered in a moss of the tenderest green, which the vassal waters kissed in silent veneration. On the right hand, a small cascade just served to deepen the sense of solitude on the mind of the beholder. On the left, the shore scarce

rose above the surface of the lake, and the summits of some distant hills, which appeared above the undulating heath, suggested the idea of an interminable extension of the vale which here commenced. Around the shores of the craggy side, the shrubs were silvered with a dripping moisture, occasioned by the oozing from another lake, which lay at a loftier elevation on the other side of the mountain.

In a boat, on the lake, was a servant of the house, who was employed in angling for some grey trout. Esther watched him pulling gently to the land, drawing in his skiff, and carrying his net well loaded to the house, without stirring from her attitude of contemplation.

In this situation, she was surprized by the appearance of several peasant children, who were advancing by the winding road that led out of the valley. They were all attired in white, and one, a peachy cheeked boy of five or six years of age, held in his arms a kind

of effigy, dressed up in female habiliments, and having the breast bone of a goose as a succedaneum for the human countenance. When they came in sight of the lady, they suddenly halted, and a whispering consultation ensued, which from the stooping position of many of the figures, seemed to consist of certain words of encouragement and counsel, addressed to the bearer of the effigy. Advancing then within a few paces of the seat on which Esther lay expecting them, they separated, and fell back on either side, suffering the little fellow to advance alone, and speak for them to the lady. Esther watched his demeanour in this awful crisis with a natural interest. Looking up in her face, with a bold smile, and a blush, which was the only mark of conscious hardihood in his appearance, he said with great distinctness:

"Good morrow, ma'am."

"Good morrow, sir," replied Esther, smiling,

but relaxing nothing of her stateliness, nor in any way assisting him.

"Somethin', ma'am, for Miss Biddy, if you please."

"And who is Miss Biddy, sir?"

This was not in the little fellow's lesson, and he looked sidelong over his shoulder for assistance from the prompter. A girl, somewhat older, and with a sisterly resemblance in the face, advanced a step or two, and said, with a downcast eye and a timid accent:

"Saint Bridget, ma'am, if you please."

"And who is Saint Bridget, love?"

This again was a question too deeply theological for any head in the little assembly, and they all looked at one another with puzzled and enquiring eyes. But as Esther, although a conscientious protestant, was not, in the language of the cottagers, a "convarther," she did not think it necessary to press it any farther. Recollecting that the following day

was the anniversary of the saint above named, and remembering also the village customs, which used to afford her so much delight in her infancy, she placed a liberal donation in the hand of "Miss Biddy's" youthful advocate, and had the pleasure of seeing the whole party hurry off, whispering together and conversing in suppressed exultation.

"I hardly know what my uncle might say," she murmured to herself, "if he knew that I encouraged so profane a ceremony. But whatever claims the great virgin of Kildare might lay upon me in a religious point of view, I cannot avoid feeling some interest in the name, when I recollect that it has suggested one of the Irish melodies."

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when a low hoarse voice, at her ear, said, in a tone of deep anxiety and earnestness:

"Be not alarmed, Esther! Let me entreat you, Esther, not to feel any alarm."

She sprung to her feet at the sound of this startling voice, and, looking back with great rapidity, beheld a figure that sent a shivering through every nerve within her frame. Richard Lacy was standing underneath a fading laburnum; his attire of a meaner appearance than had ever been usual with him; his face (to use a powerful and untranslateable French expression) utterly *decharné;* his eyes sending out a wild and sickly fire, and his whole figure wearing the plain and visible marks of diminished fortunes, of ruined hopes, and faded energies of mind and person.

"I, too," he said, perceiving the irrepressible emotion and surprize with which Esther gazed upon him, "I, too, you see, can play the spectre when I please." And he pointed with a horrid smile to his ghastly countenance, and then to his attenuated frame.

"Mr. Lacy!" Esther said, in a low voice, and panting with agitation.

"And yet," he continued, with the same ghastly calmness in his utterance, "it is but the rehearsal of a part that I must soon be called to enact in gloomy truth. They are calling for me fast, but I am come here first to finish my last scene before your eyes, for I have loved your praise, once, far too well. I could not die, Esther, without bidding you farewell, not that I fear it yet for many a day, but it is possible."

"Oh, do not say it."

"Wherefore should I not?" he exclaimed with sudden passion—"Why do you bid me not? I could tell you who has brought me to that point. I know, and you know, who it is that made this world look worthless in my eyes, and crossed my life with torture, disappointment, woe and want; and yet you bid me to remain among the miseries which that one has spread about me, you bid me hug the rack to which that one has bound me! I could tell you who it is, but

I will not; — for I love you — deeply, to the death, I love you.—Ah, shrink not from the declaration of a dying man."

"Dying!"

"Aye, dying, though it be by morsels. Dying a fearful and despairing death; dying all full of blood; all hopeless; all dismayed; aye, for the first time, all dismayed with my forebodings!"

"Oh, do not—do not speak so shockingly——"

"What should I do?"

"Repent——!"

"Of what? Count me up, first, the sum of that which I have laid upon my soul; and number, then, the years which this worn frame is fitted to outlive, and see if I have time to wash the mass away. The fiends have got the better of my courage. I could not bear the horrors of my bed at night. Such shapes—such shrieks—such menaces—such dreams of horror and of anguish. They told me that I had no chance of life, and yet they wished to tie

me down to all the horrors of solitude and recollection. But I could not bear the fever in my mind, and I hurried from that troubled host of thoughts, to look for peace and pity and refreshment in your presence."

"Oh, would I could afford it!" exclaimed Esther, with great earnestness and warmth.

"But you cannot," cried Lacy, bitterly. "They tell me, at my house that I am changed; they think, because my looks and actions are no longer what they were, that I am altered too in mind and in affection. Because they see not the fever of ambition burning in my eye, they think I am content; because they mark not the working of hate upon my brow and lip, they think I am appeased; because they see not the turmoil of love in all my conduct and my speech, they think I am resigned. But they deceive themselves. The evil spirits have not left my bosom, but they have done their work, and they are slumbering within their house. I am still disgusted with the

thing I am, although I make no effort to become what I would be. I still detest—abhor my enemy, although it be with an inactive hatred; I love you still, though with a hopeless passion."

"Believe me, believe me," said Esther, "I feel for you."

"And is that much?" the half delirious man exclaimed, standing erect, and knitting his brows upon her, "Is that so wonderful? For you, Esther, I would have been the glorious thing that I have failed to become; and for you have I become the miserable thing I am! Great Justice!" he exclaimed, throwing up his arms and remaining in an attitude of despairing wonder, "Is this the end of all my early projects, of all my hope, of all my love? The innocent have died—the sinless wept—my hands have become clammy with gore. I am loaded with the curses of bereaved thousands, the world labours to heave me from its breast, and the dreaded deep roars for me like a

hungry monster—and this is all my ease, that Esther feels for me!"

"Oh, Richard! Richard!"

Not before, in this interview, had Esther ventured to address him thus familiarly by his Christian name. The suggestion of intimacy which it conveyed struck through his bosom with a softening influence; he clasped his hands, bent gradually forward, and every limb appeared to feel the quickening agitation. Esther, feeling her power, resolved to use it for his benefit.

"Richard," she said, "if you have loved me, as you say, grant me this one request—"

Perceiving that he did not move, she laid her hand upon his arm, and repeated, in a softened voice. "Richard!"

He looked on her with an expression of the most intense pleasure, and said, "What would you, Esther? What must I do for you?"

"Return to your home," said Esther, bursting into tears, and extending her hands towards him

in deep pity—"Repress those horrid fancies; live, and be Esther's friend! Oh, do not yield that strong and gifted mind to false and destructive imaginations. Whatever may have been your faults, you have much to hope, for you have been strongly, terribly tempted. A single one of those many passions, which have consumed your youth, might have sufficed for the endangering of many a soul. Despair not then, for your own sake—for mine. Return to your home, employ your days in offices of benevolence and kindness, deserve all that you can, and believe me, I know, I feel, that there is much within your power."

The unfortunate Lacy listened to her with motionless attention, and seemed, when she had made an end, to feel regret that he could not continue to enjoy the happiness he felt in hearing her. He then folded his arms, and remained some moments with his eyes dilated, and fixed in mournful meditation on the earth.

"Esther," he said at last, "that one support, at least, is left for me—Whether I succeed or fail, at least remember that I obeyed you at the instant. Whatever be the colour of the repute that may remain after me, remember that to you, at least, I was not guilty of any error; whether I die detested or forgiven, forget not that to you, at least, I lived sincere, unchanging, and devoted."

He took her hand in his, shook it twice with great force, regarding her at the same time with the air of despairing resolution which one feels at resigning for ever a sole and ruling hope. He then walked up the pathway, continuing to turn upon her the same heart shattered gaze, until he was hid by the interposing shrubs. When she could no longer behold him, Esther sunk down upon the seat which she had left, and relieved herself by crying bitterly.

He kept his word with Esther, in adopting

the course of life which she recommended; but the shock which his health had undergone was too severe, and he died before the year was ended. This event was regarded by some with pity, and by the greater number with indifference. Whether the change in his conduct were effected by the influence of true repentance, or merely a new direction given to the ruling passion; whether it was found available or otherwise, are questions not to be solved on earth: but, as we know that the just Author of human nature always proportions his mysterious aids to the violence of those passions which he has implanted in the heart, it may be hoped that Lacy's exertions were not made in vain.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

VOL. II.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

CHAPTER I.

FEW persons in this world, I believe, ever led a life of more equable prosperity than mine, until my years approached that period when the fortunes of most men cease to be stormy, and the passion for adventure has died away, or given place to a longing for domestic peace and comfort. I was one of a race who may be considered the only tenants of land in my native Island. Our castle

owners, above us, and our cabin holders, below, are both men of estate; while we occupy the generous position of honorary agents to the former, serving to collect their rents in a troublesome country; and of scape goats on whom the latter are enabled to repose the burthen of rent, tythes, and county charges.

I was, for any thing I could ever learn to the contrary, a happy man. My wife, Mary, though superior to me in birth and education, was gentle and affectionate, and my daughter Ellen was not only a beauty, but an excellent house-keeper. But, let me here inform you how I was fortunate enough to conclude a matrimonial engagement, in which the advantage in rank and almost every other circumstance, was on my side.

It was, Ladies, an elopement. I was standing, on a sultry day in Autumn, amongst a crowd of persons, who were witnessing the races of a well known city in our neighbourhood. The course occupied a space of some miles around a gentle

acclivity, on the summit of which was a stunted obelisk of modern architecture, which on this occasion displayed a flag of gay device. The whole side of another hill, which arose on the farther side of the course, between me and the city, seemed to be one fluctuating mass of life. It was covered with a black multitude, over which the bright sunshine shed its heavy autumnal splendour, glittering occasionally with a more gay and marked effect on the white kerchiefs and scarlet mantles which enlivened the darker ground work of the scene. It resembled a moving lake of black hats and brisk caps and bonnets, intermingling its contents in a hundred eddies, and receiving tributary streams from the many pathways which led over the fields and hedges from the city. The tents, as tattered as the robe of Julius Cæsar, the casks of liquor, the shining drinking vessels set forth at the entrance of each; the grotesque signs, the stand-house, the band, the equipages filled with flaunting silks and

muslins, and the mass of equestrian spectators who made the field shake under them from time to time, contributed to render the scene not a little exhilirating.

I leaned against a stunted tree, after the *heats* were ended, listening to the conversation of some country people who were seated on the short sun-burnt grass, eating gingerbread and slily passing round under cover of the women's blue cloaks, a bulky substance, which from the use made of it, I judged to be a quart bottle. The people were descending from the various eminences which they had occupied for the advantage of seeing the course, and the tents became too narrow and scanty for the numbers who were anxious to obtain refreshment within. The carriages and horsemen, surrounded by clouds of dust, were rapidly whirling off in the direction of the city, and, in a little time, most of the respectable spectators had taken the way homeward.

Suddenly, a low, harsh sound, resembling

that occasioned by the inundation of a great mass of waters, arose from the multitude, and made me turn my eyes quickly towards the hill before mentioned. I saw the crowd thickening in the centre, while the groups, which before were scattered at a distance over the landscape, now hurried rapidly towards the main throng. The dull indistinct sound, which I at first heard, soon broke out into shrieks and yells, and I beheld female figures flying in terror towards the highway leading to the city. The condensed multitude seemed to be borne backward and forward in an agitated and tumultuous manner, while sticks were brandished and stones thickened in the air. At the same time, as if the discord on earth had communicated itself to the heavens, the face of the sky was overspread, and a deluge of rain was poured upon the combatants, which continued without intermission throughout the evening.

While I hastened to the shelter of a close

thorn, (the only one that was left unoccupied near me,) my attention was caught by a lady and gentleman on horseback, who were galloping away from the scene of action, and followed by a servant in plain livery. On a sudden, I perceived the lady stretching away from her companion, who presently pulled up his horse, as if fearful of alarming the flying animal by the appearance of pursuit. I saw the latter take a path which passed close by the spot on which I stood. In a little time I perceived, by the expanded nostrils, staring eyes, and levelled ears of the animal, that, although the fair rider kept her seat with great firmness, still the excursion was not undertaken at her own suggestion. The extreme rapidity of its motion, however, seemed to produce that effect on her mind, which fear, alone, could not accomplish. A short, faint scream, which pierced my very heart with pity, broke from the poor young lady; her head,

which until then had been bent forward in an attitude of steady resolution, now hung helplessly back, her small round hat was carried away, and a mass of bright tresses streamed upon the wind. Onward still the animal pressed, making the condition of the rider still more perilous. Her frame grew momently more feeble, and swung from side to side, while the reins slackened in her grasp, and she seemed, at every fresh bound of the steed, in the imminent danger of reeling from the saddle.

The manner in which I was enabled to arrest the progress of the steed, to restore the dear equestrian to her feet, and in fine, to leave her in perfect security, it is not needful to detail. Let it be sufficient to relate, that this adventure led to an acquaintance with the lovely fugitive, and this acquaintance ended in the elopement above alluded to. Fearful that we could not obtain the consent of her brother, who was her only living relative, and

on whom she was entirely dependent, we formed the unwise resolution of first placing it beyond his power to oppose our wishes, if they happened to jar against his own. This was, indeed, a thoughtless act of mine, considering that they were orphans, had lived together from their childhood, and ever, until then, had kept a single counsel. It was doubly criminal and inconsiderate, as her brother had been very kind to her, and though his fortune was not brilliant, afforded her even more of elegant accomplishment than was usual in her rank.

We had found an accommodating clergyman, and the ceremony was nearly concluded, when the young gentleman, whose pursuit we were prepared to expect, (though we scarcely imagined it could be so rapid) was added to our wedding party. To our great astonishment there were no marks of displeasure on his countenance, and he remained, with much

equanimity of manner to witness the completion of the ceremony. I saw that he avoided looking towards his sister, who seemed on the point of sinking to the earth, and that his lip trembled for a moment when he heard her speak the last necessary words of assent. The instant the clergyman had ceased to speak, and while the few who were in the room awaited, with embarrassed silence, the first movement of one so deeply interested, he walked up to the bride, took her hand, kissed her, and looking in her face for a few seconds, with a smile, in which the bitterness of reproach was tempered by the deepest pity and affection, he said:

"Since it is beyond recal, I will be one of those to congratulate you. You have found a way, at length, to rid yourself of a disagreeable restraint. Why did you not tell me of this, Mary? What had I ever done to make you distrust my affection for you? If

you think I could have been selfish enough to prefer my own satisfaction to your happiness, you mistake my character altogether, and you ought to have known it, Mary, before now. I hoped you would, at least, have allowed me to act the part of a brother to you, when this occasion should arrive. But you have rejected me from your confidence, and I will never seek to acquire it again. Good bye!" Here he pressed her hand, closed his lips hard, and looked long into her eyes. "I am sorry you should have thought this necessary."

He then shook her hand again, and letting it fall, as suddenly as if his touch had paralyzed its energies, turned round, and left the house with a step and look of forced ease and indifference.

To me he said not a word, nor cast a single glance either of indignation or forgiveness. I expected rage and reproaches, and for those I was prepared, but this perfect and

unimpassioned contempt (if indeed so positive a feeling at all entered into his thoughts), this total forgetfulness of my very presence, had something in it so annoying, that the recollection of that moment, whenever it occured at any subsequent period of my life, made the blood tingle in my very ears and fingers.

In a short time after, Ulick Regan (the brother) left the country, without making any one acquainted with the place of his destination. Previous to his departure, he invested the sum which he originally intended for her dowry in the hands of a common friend; with whom it still remained, for the benefit of her eldest daughter.

The calm generosity and forbearance, with which he had treated her, made an impression on the young mind of Mary Tracy which never after was removed. Even during the first months of our married life, although every day convinced me more and more of the depth and

sincerity of her affection, I had frequently the mortification to detect the traces of weeping in her eyes, and to observe, by her repeated and involuntary fits of abstraction, that her thoughts were still occupied with the remembrance of her ingratitude. I believe the first time I heard her volunteer the mention of his name, after our marriage, was on the birth of our second child, when, after gazing on it with great fondness for some moments, she asked me, in a low voice, "If it was not like Ulick, in the eyes?" To which I replied, as if struck on a sudden with the force of the remark, that it was an exact fac-simile; although, to say a truth, excepting the general resemblance which the great human family bear one to another, there was not much to be said on the similitude.

With the exception of this little melancholy on Mary's part, we passed our time with sufficient comfort at Cushlanebeg, the name of my little residence I kept a couple of stout riding

horses, an outside jaunting car, to give the ladies an airing on Sundays, and a small turf boat, which was moored in a creek of the neighbouring river, and by means of which I maintained a little export trade with the capital of the county in corn, pork, freeholders, and other commodities which I raised on my farm.

I endeavoured, with all the good-will in my power, to sustain the character for hospitality which had been transmitted to me by my father. I did so, nevertheless, with a laudable share of prudence. It was my principle never to give entertainments, and seldom to be wholly without society. I seldom gave "parties," for I thought it no part of the virtue of hospitality to summon a number of quiet families from their comfortable fire-sides to my own, to keep them tossing their heels into the air to the sound of a small current of wind forced through a number of curiously varied apertures, or plying them with a frightful excess of stimulant at an hour when nature

yearned for the sedatives of slumber and quiescence, leaving them, moreover, to answer for many a *nien-she-sthig* * that was given, in the interim, to the weary wayfarer who might call at their houses. Let every man make his house merry, while he holds it, was my sentiment. A cheerful gentleman, whose chimnies may be discerned from the king's highway, will never be in want of society, though he should never stir abroad to look for it. This is a fact which I have learned from experience.

Such was my course of life up to the period when that horrid passion, the ravages of which so swiftly overthrew my peace, and tore up all my earthly hopes, first shed its darkening soil upon a heart that, until then, was light and comparatively guiltless. The monotony of the events, which filled up my time of youth and manhood, had left my nature untempted and my passions unexcited. I was not prosperous enough to be-

*Not at home.

come intoxicated, nor poor enough to grow moody and dark-hearted, nor sufficiently at ease in my circumstances to sit idle and invent sin. I had so many objects to accomplish, from year to year, that my mind was never free from a certain degree of care;. but they never were singly of sufficient magnitude to occasion solicitude, nor to arouse ambition.

CHAPTER II.

My daughter, Ladies, I have already said, was beautiful; and where Beauty is, there Love will surely find his time to enter. The articles of marriage were concluded on a Christmas Eve, between Rowan Clancy, the son of a neighbouring gentleman, and my blushing child; and indeed (if the testimony of trembling hands and blushes might be taken) to the delight of each party.

After the necessary documents had been all duly signed and sealed, my friend Clancy (the bridegroom's father) and I went to take a snack of collared head and cider, while the young people, who were not so hungry, nor so curious, remained chatting together in the room which we had left.

"Well, Clancy," said I, "so this great croppy-gardener, this weeder-out of disaffection, is come, with his hoes and rakes and nippers, to make the ground clear in our neighbourhood?"

"You mean Dalton?"

"I do."

"He will be welcome to you, at all events. He is always polite and courteous to you, though we, useless beings, come in for the drum-sticks and knuckle-bones of his good will. I never in my life saw one man get so fond of another, at first sight, as he did of you the other day at the inquest. It would almost

appear as if he had some appointment in his head for you."

"Pho!" said I, "what appointment do you talk of? Except he made me a process-server or a clerk of petty sessions, what could he do for me?"

"Don't you know that he has great influence at the Castle? How would you like the post of vice-regal secretary?—or a chief magistracy?—or a coronership?—or even a simple commission of the peace? This is a fine money-making, litigious, head-breaking, house-breaking country."

"Poh!" I exclaimed, "I never had, nor ever desire to have, any ambitious projects. I have an affectionate wife, [I heard Mary just turning the handle of the door as she entered] a dutiful and sensible, yet lively, daughter. I am contented with my condition, and I think if I were tempted by any offer that could bring increase of care with increase of honour, I would have no

hesitation in declin——Well, Willy, what's the matter?"

The interruption was occasioned by the sudden entrance of my second boy, who dashed into the room with shoes covered by a composition of snow and puddle, eyes staring and eager, and cheeks flushed with exercise, his dark cord jacket and trowsers whitened in sundry places with the fragments of well aimed snowballs, and his shirt-frill lying wrinkled, moist, and plaitless, about his neck. He pulled off his little leathern cap (which was shockingly abused, considering the time he had it), and said very loudly:

"Two men, papa, are waiting to spake to you."

"*Spake*, Willy!" cried his mother, "I often told you *speak* was the word."

"Weeting to speak to you, sir," the boy repeated.

"You have a shocking brogue, child," said his mother.

Without tarrying to chide him for the unnecessary length to which he carried the improvement, I went to give audience to the strangers in the kitchen.

One of these fellows was a city bailiff, who brought me a summons to attend as petit juror at the next assizes.

" Poh," said I, " you must not give it me."

" Oh, fait, sir, —"

" I can't go. There, throw it into the fire, and here's a sixpence. You shall have a glass of spirits, if you please. Now mind, you lost my summons; that's an honest fellow."

" Long life to your honour."

And the summons was burned accordingly.

The other man, a little ferret in the pay of Dalton, brought me a letter from that gentleman, which I had been expecting for some days, which I received with no little anxiety. Notwithstanding the tone of indifference which I assumed to Clancy, I had, in point of fact,

become more closely connected with Dalton, during the previous month, than I cared to let him understand. A magistrate himself, and toiling hard for preferment, he had expressed a wish for my co-operation, and opened to my view prospects of personal advantage which I found it difficult to regard with that indifference of which I boasted. The influence which a little exertion, such as he recommended, would procure me among the people of the neighbourhood; the emoluments, trifling indeed in appearance, but yet capable of being improved into a return worthy of consideration; the rank to which it would lift me among the gentry of the country; the post which perhaps it would become my right to occupy among the representatives of ancient families, at sessions and assizes; no insolent bailiff nor Peeler to slap the court-house doors in my face; no impertinent crier to pick me out of a crowd with his long white wand, and bid me "Lave that, an' make room for

the gentlemen o' the Bar—" I figured to myself all these flattering circumstances, while I pased up and down our flagged hall, with the letter still unopened in my hand, under such an agitation of spirits as I had seldom before experienced. Those who have been accustomed to read of the influence of ambition on those characters only who have fixed their desires on some object so dignified and important, as to comnand an instant and general sympathy, may perhaps smile at my petty aspirings, and refuse to admit the sufficiency of my motives; but the lesson, in all instances, is the same, and the impulse equally violent and tempestuous. Ambition is said to be the passion of advanced years. I found it so. But when it does awake, it acts upon the soul like the waters of the fabled fountain of Bimini, rekindling faded energies and aspirations, and renewing the old man's youth like the eagle's.

Suddenly I heard a stir in the inner room, and Clancy presently opened the door, in order

to depart. I started, as if I had been conscious of some guilty act, and hastily concealed the letter, while I advanced to do him the parting honours. Rowan, too, departed for a distant part of the country on some business; after it had been settled that the marriage should take place early in the ensuing month, about which time his return was expected. But fortune laughed in secret at our arrangements.

The letter contained matter of a more startling nature than I had anticipated. It ran as follows:—

"If you regard either my interest, or your own, come hither instantly. My wretched son, after a week's absence, is just returned to ruin me for ever. Come—come at once; and take—for your reward, a father's gratitude and all a friend's endeavours for your benefit."

I ordered a horse, upon the instant, and gallopped in the direction of Dalton's house.

CHAPTER III.

A PARTY of police were exercising on the lawn before the hall-door. I passed them by, and, entering hastily, found Dalton in his drawing-room, seated at a table, leaning on his elbows, and with his temples resting on his clenched hands. In a chair, at a little distance, sat his son, a youth about eighteen years of age, of excelling beauty, and fashionably dressed, without the slightest appearance of foppery.

Soon after I entered, he left the room, a politeness which afforded a considerable relief to his father and myself.

"Is he gone?" Dalton asked, raising his head and gazing round, in anger. Oh, Tracy, he will send me to my grave!"

"How is this, Dalton?"

"A week he has been away, and now he comes to tell me he has gone in debt five hundred pounds, which must be paid before to-morrow, or my poor boy's character is lost amongst his respectable acquaintances. He is my joy and my ruin, my delight and my despair. I had rather think of perishing, than let him want the money, for I know his principles of honour to be so quick and fine that it would be consigning him to misery. And yet where should I get it before night?"

He paused, but I was silent.

"Tracy, could you assist me?"

"With what?" said I.

"Lend me this sum."

"Five hundred pounds!" I cried aloud, in consternation.

"Aye, for one day!"

"If but for an hour—" said I—

"What interest you will."

"How could you think," said I, "that it was possible I could have so much———" I paused, for at that instant I recollected that I had got six hundred pounds, (my daughter's wedding portion) into my possession the preceding day. My hesitation did not escape the piercing eye of Dalton.

"If you can serve me, Tracy," he said, "do not refuse to reach out your hand. I am certain of receiving double the sum within a week, and you will bind me to your service for ever."

"Is it not strange," said I, "that so good and talented a young man as Mr. Henry Dalton would place you in so arduous a difficulty?"

" This is a trifle," said Dalton, in great distress, " to what he has done before. He will destroy me utterly. He gambles, races, fights, and sports away all that I gain by toil, and peril to my life."

" I would not listen to his requests."

" Requests! He make me a request for money! Nor would I neither, if he did. But that is never done. He is far too sensitive to ask for it. But when I see him sitting silent there, with the longing in his heart, even while he strives to appear cheerful and indifferent to his necessities, I cannot bear to leave him in restraint."

" Necessities!"

" To him they are become so. Ah, Tracy, youth at best is but a fleeting season, and it is cruelty in age to abridge it of those manly sports which are its pride and pleasure. I see my early days reflected through my boy, and I cannot endure the idea of restricting him in

his amusements, any more than I could, at his age, have endured restraint myself."

"But that his own filial affection should not suggest——"

"It would, it would, if he were only aware of the ruin he is bringing on me, but that he knows not, nor must ever know. A great part of my pain on those occasions is in concealing from him the inconvenience he occasions."

"You astonish me!" I exclaimed. "And if your gold flows thus away from you, where do you think of getting riches?"

"The world is full of them," said Dalton, "but where could I find such another son?"

A pause now ensued, during which I felt not a little perplexity. I felt sincerely for the father's anguish, peculiar as I considered the cause to be, and yet I could not tell in what way I might assist him. But wherefore need I dwell upon the means he used to prevail with me? Enough is said when I mention that he did prevail; and

that I placed my daughter's wedding portion in his hands, under the full conviction that it would be refunded before the ensuing month, and with his note of hand to that effect.

As I descended the stairs, young Dalton opened the parlour door, and enquired, with great appearance of interest, after the health of my family, and in particular, but with some appearance of hesitation, after Ellen. I answered all his questions without making any allusion to the intended marriage, for it had been agreed on both sides to keep the circumstance private until it approached the eve of celebration.

I then remounted, and rode home. The house appeared more than usually lonely on that evening. The sky was clear, sunny, and breathless, and the wide prospect around our door was wrapt in a bright winter calm. The reigning silence was so profound, that I heard the trampling of the horses on the hard and echoing high-road at the distance of several miles; while the voices

of those within doors sounded through the open house like the waking noises which a sick man hears through the dulness of his morning lethargy. The snow still remained in the garden ridges and along the hedges, and a few light fragments of mist, that hung suspended and motionless in mid air, seemed to have caught the reflection of the general whiteness from the earth. I entered our parlour slowly, and taking a chair before the fire, began to contemplate the burning turf sods, with that air of grave deliberation so exquisitely painted by Cowper, while Ellen retired to her chamber to indulge her feelings of loneliness in solitude, and Mary sung to the piano.

Towards night, the sky began to blacken, a sullen raw wind drove through the naked trees that intermingled their aged boughs over our thatch, and thick showers of snow were soon after drifted along the soil. The dreariness of the evening was favourable to the moody and feverish influences that were every moment gaining

ground within my heart. I felt no desire to mingle in the conversation of my family, and looked on, in musing and troubled silence, while (in compliance with an ancient custom), they lighted a largé candle which was suffered to burn in a corner of the room throughout the night. They sat down to tea, apparently a little perplexed at my continued silence; and while I joined them in observing the abstinences of the vigil (more strictly than I had done at noon), by forbearing to qualify the acerbity of the narcotic with a spoonful of cream, or to increase the pinguifying influence of the bread by the addition of butter, our meal resembled, by its silence at least, the meditative and mortified after sunset repast of the primitive Christians.

On a sudden we were all startled by the report of fire arms at an alarming proximity, and by the sound of several voices, speaking aloud in those squeaking gibbering tones by

which the insurgents of those times were accustomed to disguise their real tones. I sprung from my chair, with a feeling of fiery eagerness, and zeal for action, which I had never before experienced. My wife and daughter looked pale, panting and terrified, uncertain whether to prevent my intention of going out, or suffer me to choose my part in silence. While I snatched my carbine from a corner, little Willy, catching up his cap, was about to run to the hall door before me, when his mother commanded him to remain in the room. Ulick, our eldest and our spoilt, let fall his book, and stared on us in silence.

I hurried out on the lawn, after throwing the ramrod into the barrel to ascertain that it was loaded. The snow had ceased to fall, and the general whiteness of the fields aided the effect of the misty and imperfect moonlight so effectually, that a brightness almost as distinct as that of twilight reigned over the country.

I heard a voice, which I recognized as that of Dalton's, at the farther extremity of an extensive sheepwalk, calling to his men aloud, in a tone of anger and impatience. At the same instant three or four fellows, dressed in women's clothes, and with their faces blackened, gallopped swiftly across the lawn on rough working horses, returning a wild hurra! to the scattered volley which was discharged after them. I ran towards the spot from which Dalton's voice proceeded, and was in the centre of the large plain before alluded to, when I saw another "hand maid" of Lady Rock, gallopping in the direction which his comrades had already taken, and flinging the snow backwards on his track as he sped rapidly along. On a sudden, he espied me, and turning the horse's head, while he pointed forward with the blade of a scythe, in the manner of one leading a charge, he gallopped straight towards me. Not entertaining a doubt of his intention, yet

feeling a perfect confidence in my weapon, I lowered myself on one knee, and covering him with entire steadiness and composure, witheld my fire until he came completely within shot. As the trampling of the animal sounded nearer, a slight anxiety made my heart thrill but it did not disturb my aim. A few bounds more would have brought him upon me—I fired, and the next instant beheld him dashing through the cloud of smoke, with revenge and triumph in his look and gesture. He raised the scythe, against which I could only uplift my faithless empty carbine, but at that instant his horse, terrified by the struggle, reared and wheeled directly round, so that he spent his rage and strength in a back-handed stroke, which took me with the point of the rough weapon over the brow, and made a hideous and painful rent to the cheekbone. He did not attempt to renew the blow, for the Police were now within a few yards of the spot on which he stood. He gal-

lopped forward while they severally lifted their pieces to bring him down. Stung by the pain of my wound and burning for revenge, I remained kneeling erect, supporting myself on one side, and gazing intently, to watch the issue, on my flying foe. A first shot missed, a second—I bit my tongue in an agony of rage; a third, and I saw the horse plunge forward, and redouble its speed, but the rider lay upon the plain. A thrill of wicked delight shot through my frame, and I sunk down on the snow with all the satiety of joy that gratified vengeance can bestow on an ill regulated mind.

The pain of my wound, slight though it was in reality, enfeebled me so much, that I could with difficulty acknowledge the civilities of Dalton, while he assisted me to rise, and ordered two of the Police to convey me towards the house. When we came near our dwelling he stopped, and with a thoughtful delicacy, for which I felt sincerely grateful to him, suggested

that it would be prudent to go to a tenant's house and there dress the cut in some manner, so as to enable me to go home alone, and thus prevent the shock which my family might receive from seeing me brought to them in this helpless condition.

"Abel Thracy shot!" exclaimed the poor woman at whose door we knocked for admission. "Oh, millia gloria! an' the Peelers and all! Nora, a chree, run an' light the rish."

"And get a cup of cold water," said Dalton. "Where's your husband?" he added after we had entered.

"E' where would he be but in bed, sir, this time o' night?"

"Bring me his shoes."

They brought a pair of heavy brogues covered with mud.

"How came these brogues so dirty?" asked Dalton, in a stern tone.

"E' then, because he was workin' in the garden 'till sunset."

"Hag that you are, and croppy that he is, I'll hang him for these brogues. He was one of the ruffians on the field."

"Faix, an' troth, and as I hope for glory sir——"

"Hold your peace! Search the house," he said to his police.

They obeyed, while the woman assisted in dressing the wound. But they soon returned to say that their search was ineffectual.

As I lay back in my chair, while the woman went in the next room for some bandage, I perceived an action of Dalton's which perplexed me considerably. Imagining himself to be unobserved, and covered by the partial gloom thrown around him by my own shadow, I saw him take some large substance from his breast, and place two paper parcels along with it. He thrust them all, far in, under the low thatch, after which, hearing the woman's footstep returning along the earthen floor, he came

forward into the light, and superintended the washing and dressing of my cut with an officious care.

When this act of mercy was performed, and we prepared to depart, Dalton suddenly turned to the woman and said :

" Yesterday, upon the race course of N—— your husband was one of a large mob, that crossed my son's horse and prevented him from winning a large stake. Your husband was heard to say, that while he was able to lift a cudgel no Orange horse should win upon that course."

" He never said it, not belyin' you, sir."

" I have it from those that heard, and saw him too. He said they'd keep the course Catholic, at any rate, if they lost every thing else ; and that no Orange horse should ever carry a sweepstakes in that county."

" Not belying your honour, he never said it," repeated the woman.

"I never had *sech* a word in my mouth," said the man himself, speaking from the inner room.

"And a week before that, when my son fought that duel with Mr. O'Sullivan, your husband was with the mob on the ground. They gathered about my son, as soon as they saw that O'Sullivan was wounded," he added, turning to me, "they dragged him from his horse, and, but for his own resolution, he would never have left the ground alive, for daring to shoot a Catholic, though in his own defence. And this fellow here was the ringleader of that gang."

"Them that told you that," cried Shanahan (the owner of the house), springing out of bed, and appearing suddenly amongst us in his *camicio*, them that told you that, sir, told you what was not the fact. It was I that saved your son, it was I that thrun myself a-top of him when the blows were comin' down like hail, and Boys', says I, roarin, 'dont

ye murther masther Harry, for he's a gentleman, an a good man', says I, 'whatever—"

He paused on the sudden.

"Whatever his father is," added Dalton, "was not that the word?"

"It was! I'll not gainsay you," cried the man with vehemence.

"Very well," said Dalton, "you have begun, and have flung down the challenge, let it now be seen who is to be the victor."

At this moment, a faint shriek outside made the speakers start upon the sudden. It was repeated nearer, and Shanahan sprung to the door.

"It is my mother's voice!" he exclaimed. Flinging back the bolt, and throwing the door wide, he gave admittance to an aged woman. She hurried in, striking her bosom with her clenched hands, her nerveless frame shaking with years and terror, and a short shrill cry of anguish breaking at intervals from her thin and

bloodless lips. Looking round for her son, she cast herself upon his arm, muttering short prayers, intermingled with bursts of feeble grief, and shrieks that seemed to come from half exhausted lungs.

"What is the matther, mother?" exclaimed Shanahan, "what brings you from your house at such a time o' night?"

She stared ghastlily on him, and pointed out into the dark with one shrivelled hand and arm.

"What have you seen? What's there? Speak, mother!"

She did not answer him, but moaned and shivered, and continued pointing out into the dark.

"Hold up the light. This poor woman, sir," he added, to me, is nearly ninety years of age, an' the senses is lavin' her poor thing. Where's Phaudrig, mother?"

She shrieked more loudly than before, and

repeated the action above described. The man looked now exceedingly alarmed.

"She means something!" he said. "She does'nt screech that way for nothing. Stop, isn't that the sound of a step? Who's there?"

Snatching the light from the little girl Nora, he raised it high above his head, so as to shed its beams upon a group who were entering at that moment. It consisted of some of the Police who had remained upon the field, and who now bore between them the body of the man who had been shot. The aged mother sprung from the arms of her son, and pointed to the corpse, when they had laid it on the ground, with both her bony hands extended and her face turned back with an appealing look to her son. She then pointed to Dalton, to me, and to the Police, and sunk down upon the body.

"It is my brother!" said Shanahan.

"Here, take the candle, Nora, and don't be lookin' at me!"

The girl took the light, and he let his head sink upon his breast, while a wild cry of funereal grief broke from the females of the house.

"Shanahan," said I, "I am sorry to see any friend of your's implicated in such a hopeless business as that on which those people were engaged to-night. What had I ever done to your brother that he should lift his weapon against my life?"

And, so saying, I pointed to my wound.

"Mr. Tracy," the man exclaimed, lifting his head and regarding me with a sternness of expression that had something terrific in it. "I have a word to say to you. You see that corpse that is lying there, warm with the life. I give no blame to that tyger for his death [pointing to Dalton], for what could be expected from an open enemy but blows and blood? But

you, that were our neighbour, and that had nothing to gain by our blood, nor to lose by our comfort; you that we never injured, you that we often served, you had no reason to turn upon us this way.—There's my brother's blood upon my floor, an' you shed it without reason. Now by this cross I swear," and he crossed the fore-fingers of each hand, while he knitted his brows in fury and stared upon me, "I swear this year won't pass 'till I have revenge of you for this night's work. You dhrew his blood without being any way provoked, take care how soon and suddenly you may yourself be called before the same Coort! And you," he added, turning his brawny person round upon Dalton, and uplifting his clenched hand in the energy of desperate menace, "You say right, that the battle is begun. Now I tell you this, and hear me! I never yet was one of those that broke the peace and brought your life in danger, I saved the life of your son, but that indeed

was for his own sake an' not yours. I had a sister here, an' she was fool enough to be seen talkin' to you be ye'r two selves, an' 'tis unknown now where she's gone; but well *you* know it, as I fear, an' sure I am that if the truth was known, it would bring shame upon her and us and you. Now hear what I tell you! By this blood that's on my hand this night, he stooped and dabbled his fingers in the reeking neck and shoulder of the corpse, " by this warm blood I swear, I never will rest in pace until I have you brought as low as we are here this night, and there's something tells me that will not be long."

" You are all witnesses of that threat," said Dalton, turning to his men.

"They are," cried Shanahan, "and they will be witnesses of more than that if they live six months. Howld!" he exclaimed bending his fierce brows upon his wife who was clapping her hands and bawling aloud in all

the distraction of vulgar grief; "don't shame yourself an' us before 'em, by showin' 'em that we can be cowed down by any thing their spite can do. We defy them all, aye, Dalton, I defy you, though you look so sure o' me, an' you will find me a fox to catch for all! I don't threaten you, but look at that!—"

He expanded his bloody hand, and bent forward, staring on the unmoved figure of Dalton, while the corpse lay stark between. The mother gathered low, and gibbering upon her heels, the wife still venting her agony in broken moans, the remainder of the family pressing round with faces of grief or terror, and the police on the other side leaning on their carbines and regarding the half naked desperado with stern looks—to me the picture had an appalling effect, but it was not so with Dalton; he returned the menace with a hard and eager smile, and then departed without speaking.

Tracy!" the man called after me as I

prepared to follow, "remember what I say to you this night, and look to yourself. If I am to start up through the floore, or come in through the stone wall to you, I will be with you when you're laste thinkin' o' me an' my revenge. I have sworn by the holy cross. And I swear it now again, to have revenge for that poor fellow's blood."

"You are very conscientious," said the voice of Dalton, in the dark outside, "for the child of a parricide."

The man stared as if he had been struck by a galvanic shock, and then seizing a pitch-fork, was darting out at the door-way, when his wife sprung up, and, with a wild cry of entreaty, flung both her arms around his neck.

"Hurry out! Hurry out!" she exclaimed, waving her hand rapidly to me. "Oh, Morty, oh, machree, m' asthore!"

I followed her advice, closing the door rapidly behind me, and leaving the man still

struggling furiously within. The oath he had taken was one which at this period an Irish peasant seldom swore in vain, and I confess, though not naturally of a fearful disposition, my nerves were somewhat unsettled by the manner in which it was pronounced.

CHAPTER IV.

I HURRIED after Dalton, the threat still ringing in my ear, and the scene of woe and blood still present to my sight. I found him on the public road which lay between the cabin of the Shanahans and my house, engaged in conversation with his son, who had joined him just before. With little persuasion I was able to prevail on both to spend the remainder of the evening at my house.

While Henry Dalton amused himself with

the ladies, I took an opportunity of expressing to his father my apprehension lest the brother of the man we had shot should find it possible to put his menaces in execution.

"You would tremble more," said Dalton, "if you knew the circumstances of this man's story, or rather of his father's story, for he only inherits the gloomy spirit which his parent's act originated."

"Was it in allusion, then, to such an act that you called him the SON OF A PARRICIDE?"

"You shall hear the tale. It is worth hearing, as a proof of the deadly violence to which those people are sometimes apt to be carried in their fits of momentary excitation. You know the Coom Collee, or the Hag's Valley, near Killarney?"

"No" said I, "I never was at Killarney."

"Well, there is such a place in the neighbourhood of the Lakes, a vast, gloomy, shrubless, silent, rocky region, looking the very theatre

of witchery and romance. Piles of enormous mountains, with lakes embosomed among their peaks and sides at various elevations, form the entrance to this stupendous recess; as you advance you find yourself in the centre of an extensive chasm, scooped out of the heapt-up hills, with a lonely river brattling among the fallen crags, and a dreary waste of stone and heath and bog separating the precipitous and time splintered Reeks of Macgillicuddy from the less rugged mountains of the Gap. In the centre of this waste were two cottages, or rather cabins, held by two families of different names, one of them O'Sheas, from the ancient clan in the Esk mountain near Glengariff, the other consisting of the father and the grandfather of this Shanahan. Both families supported themselves by feeding sheep and goats on the sides of the neighbouring mountains, and one might have supposed that even with all the national blood flowing pure in their veins, they might have forgotten in such a

solitude, the national predilection for combat. But this was not the case, for the inhabitants of the two cabins constituted two opposite factions, the O'Sheas taunting the Shanahans with the meanness of their origin, and the latter grounding an equal quantity of vituperation upon the negligence and roguery of the O'Sheas.

"What fomented this disunion to the height was the marriage of the younger Shanahan with the eldest daughter of the other house, a circumstance which one would have supposed more likely to reconcile the opposite interests of both parties. Until that time, the father and son had lived in perfect harmony, the latter, indeed, interfering little in the family feud, which the former sustained with the vigour of a Capulet. You may suppose that the astonishment of the old man was not little, when he beheld his son whom he had been educating in a scrupulous detestation of the rival house, appear upon his floor with his Dalilah, fresh from the abode of the Philistines,

linked to his side. That fair one was the aged woman whose impotent grief appeared to affect you so forcibly to-night, and she came beneath his roof bringing for her dowry all the ancestral pride of the generations which had preceded her, and all the extreme dishonesty of that in which she had grown up and flourished.

"The wings of Peace did not overshadow this union. War was kindled upon the hearth of the Shanahans, and the ties which had from early childhood bound the affections of the young man to his aged parent were gradually unbound by the fingers of his daughter-in-law. Instead of the domestic paradise which young Shanahan, in common with all husbands of whatever rank or education, promised himself in his married life, the scenes of altercation which continually arose made it resemble one of Dante's Tartarian gyres. Many vain attempts were made by the unhappy husband to reconcile these dissensions, and his continual disappointments began to throw

a shade of gloom and menace over his own brow.

"Things had continued in this state for several months, when, on a cold November evening, the keeper of a little hunting lodge, at the end of the valley, was surprized by a visit from the old man. He appeared uneasy and dejected, and told without reserve, when questioned, the occasion of his anxiety. 'For the last three or four days', he said, 'I have seen my son and his wife whispering together in secret, and my mind misgives me that they are plotting something against my life. May heaven forgive them if they injure me, but I'm sure I never did any thing to deserve their hatred.' The keeper, perceiving his uneasiness, pressed him to remain that night, for the better security, with him and his family. But this the old man declined, saying, that if any unfairness were meant, the time would be found as easily on any future day as at present. He departed, a gloomy

presentiment appearing to lurk between his brows.

" Although the keeper imagined it probable that his apprehensions were rather the result of a hypochondriac habit than of any real cause for dread, yet he could not himself resist the unaccountable spirit of curiosity which impelled him early the next morning to walk up the Hag's-Valley, and enquire after the old man. Arrived at the cottage, the first unusual sensation which he received, was an extraordinary smell which seemed to proceed from the interior. Deeming it possible, however, that in his excited state of feeling his sense might have deceived him in this particular, (you know Rousseau calls smell the sense of imagination,) he disregarded this circumstance, and lifted the latch, without thinking much upon the matter. Within was Shanahan's wife seated at a table on which was spread their breakfast of potatoes and goat's milk, while her husband sat apart, his arms hanging downward

over the back of his chair and his eyes fixed gloomily upon the ground. He took no notice of the keeper's entrance, nor did he at all appear to be aware of the nature of any thing that passed around him. The most remarkable circumstance (and that *was* a very singular one) in the appearance of the little kitchen was, that the fire, instead of occupying as usual a modest portion of the hearth, seemed to have been enlarged during the night to an extraordinary extent, and spread its black and ashy circle over half the cabin floor. Perplexed as he was, however by this new appearance, he refrained from making any observation, and contented himself with executing the purpose for which he came, that of enquiring for the aged father.

"'He is in Limerick,' said the wife in a sullen tone, 'he is gone there with a few of the sheep.'

"'And when do you expect his return?"

"'I do'nt know. He did'nt tell me his mind when he was going."

"'One would think, Shanahan, to look at the fire you had last night, that you were dressing one of them sheep yourself. What had you in that fire?'

"The man sprung to his feet with a sudden, wild, and uncontrollable fit of laughter, and cried aloud, while he flung himself into an attitude of maniac horror:

"'Ha, ha, ha! Vauria, do you hear? Do you hear that? What had we in the fire? Ha, ha, ha! What had we in that fire?'

"And clasping his temples between his hands, he rushed out of the cottage.

"More collected than her husband, the woman simply answered, that they had been employed on the previous evening in dying wool for frieze, and had found it necessary to spread the fire considerably. Obliged to rest

satisfied, for the present, with this answer, the keeper soon after took his leave; and departed, though still in much alarm for the poor old man.

"A week passed over, and the father did not appear. The Shanahans still continuing to declare their ignorance of his situation, the honest keeper privately made known to a magistrate what he had observed, and search was made in all directions for the father, but he was never found, nor heard of, dead or living. The words of the younger Shanahan now occurred more frequently to the recollection of the keeper, and a horrid, ghastly doubt begun to associate itself with the remembrance of 'that fire.'

"But nothing could be proved against the children, although the demeanour of the son (which was all in accordance with his conduct on the first morning) served to deepen the suspicion of foul play which had already been

awakened. His look was haggard, gloomy and timorous; his manner hurried and passionate, and (which appeared the most singular alteration of the entire) he now took up and asserted with the most angry pertinacity those topics of feudal disunion on which his lost parent had insisted without meeting any support from his son. If thwarted on one of those points, his eye sent out a fire, and a fury rioted in all his demeanour which soon reduced his opponents to silence. His wife, in particular, was now compelled to hear submissively from him, in open unreserved abuse, those taunts which she could not endure to hear even faintly insinuated by his father. He still pursued his usual occupation of herding the sheep and goats upon the mountain tops, and haunted the crags and precipices from morn to night, avoiding all who approached, and seeming to find more peace among the terrors of the mountain solitude, than when he sat by his domestic hearth.

"The keeper had occassion, one chill December noon, to look after some of his sheep which were grazing near the summit of Carrawn Tual, or the Inverted Reaping Hook, the very highest mountain of the stupendous range called M'ac Gillicuddy's Reeks. Passing into the Esk Collee, a deep glen which reaches half way up the mountain, he beheld a figure up the steep, which, from the rapidity of its gestures and its hurried and irregular gait he judged to be no other than the orphan Shanahan. He was pleased at the opportunity of meeting him thus alone, in order that he might question him apart from his wife, and collate his answers with what he could recollect of hers.

"This investigation, however, should have been undertaken by a more able bodied man, or in a scene less calculated for the suggestion and concealment of evil. Although a cold wind drove the clouds rapidly across the sum-

mit of the mountain, there reigned throughout the rocky vale the stillness of a wintry calm. Two frozen lakes lay dark and shining on either side of the gigantic recess. On the right, a pile of broken rock, called the Hag's Teeth, spired up into the frosty air to the height of some hundred feet. Crag upon crag, tossed one upon the other to the very mountain peak, overhung the lonely chasm, and impressed a mighty sternness upon the character of the scene. Passing through the channelled glen before described, and ascending along the marge of a small cascade to the height of half the mountain, he found himself on a narrow isthmus, connecting the ranges of the Gap and Reek mountains, and separating the Hag's Valley which he had left from the Coom Dhuv, on the Black Valley on the other side. From this point of view he beheld a succession of stooping mountains, lonely valleys and sequestered lakes, thrown

together to the very extreme line of distance, and suggesting fancies of an irresistible and gloomy grandeur. Ascending the mountain on his right—"

"You may omit," said I, "my dear Dalton, any unnecessary description of the place, however graphical, for I have but a slender taste for the picturesque, and I am anxious to know what became of the worthy keeper."

"Something is necessary," answered Dalton, "to make you understand his situation, but I will be brief. Ascending to the summit of Carrawn Tual you pass a third valley of a still lonelier and far more terrific character than either of those you have left beneath. A semicircular chasm, precipitous on all its sides and yawning upward from a depth of som thousand feet, suddenly breaks away from the feet of the traveller and startles him with an instant and oppressive sense of insecurity. On the brink of this deep riven scar upon the

breast of Earth, the keeper found the solitary herdsman staring in stolid gloom upon the dismal void beneath. Sometimes the west wind brought the mists along from the distant ocean, and then they filled the dreary hollow, and steamed upward from the centre, as if it had been a gigantic cauldron, investing the long and rugged mountain peak in a sea of vapour. Sometimes the wreaths rolled off, and the eye might gather in, at various depths beneath, through rents in the misty veil, the outline of a sunlit crag, or a momentary gleaming on the surface of the lake, which lay more than a mile directly underneath, its waters prisoned in by mountain barriers, and fettered in chains of ice.

"The herdsman sullenly and slightly returned the greeting of his father's friend. He seemed impatient of the keeper's attempt to continue a conversation, and expressed this impatience by the churlish shortness of his manner, and the brevity of his replies.

"'Well Morty,' said the keeper, 'so you had no account o' the ould father yet, had ye?'

"The man returned a sulky 'No.'

"'Its as dhroll a business as ever I hear since I was born,' said the keeper. 'Do you think was your father ever given to takin' a dhrop at all?'

"'He never was in all his life,' replied the son rapidly. His enemies could not say that for him.'

"'And who were his enemies, Morty?'

"The man started.

"'Who should they be, why?' he exclaimed with great vehemence: 'do you think I'd be an enemy of his? his own son? Did you ever hear of our having any disputes or quarrels that you'd talk that way? Did you ever see me rise a hand to him in all my life, that you'd say that?'

"'Say what, ayeh, Morty?'

"'Call me my father's enemy.'

" 'Long from me be it so to call you, Morty. I never did. I only axed you who they were, for I thought it a dhroll business to say a man like him that use'n't to be in liquor, nor to fight, nor one whole ha'p'orth, should be spirited away in that manner. 'Tis'nt to yourself I was at all, dear knows. But tell me, will you, Morty, what is it made ye put down so big a fire the night before I was over with ye that time ?"

The man wrapped his hands tight across his breast, and fixed upon the speaker a gaze of stern and dark enquiry. The latter, feeling that he had gone too far, and shrinking from the gloomy menace which he saw in the other's glance, looked aside as if preparing for flight. But the action should have preceded the indication, for it only confirmed the awakened suspicions of the herdsman. He rushed upon the keeper, before he had time to move a single muscle in obedience to

the desire of flight, and lifted him from the earth with a strength, which passion, acting on a frame naturally vigorous, rendered almost gigantic. Extending his arms, he was about drop him over the precipice before described, when a shriek, (the harrowing appeal of Nature in her agony of fear) broke from the throat of the victim. The herdsman started back aghast, and dragged him from the brink, laying him down upon a tuft of heath and sea-pink and using gestures of maniac tenderness and deprecation, as if in the effort to soothe one whom he had dangerously offended, while he murmured rapidly. 'Again, Vauria! again! Do you hear that? I thought that noise was over. I thought you said we worn't to hear that again.'

"Then starting once more, and looking back over his shoulder, he sprung to his feet and ran howling down the hill, his hands outstretched as if for succour, and his eye glancing

now and then in terror over either shoulder as as if he were pursued by some terrific creature.

"Since that time he has not appeared among his old neighbours. The miserable widow, unable to endure the solitude which her conscience filled with terrors far more appalling than those which the hand of Nature had carved upon the scene, abandoned the gloomy valley, and settled in this neighbourhood, where, in the course of a few months she became the mother of twins. One of them was the insurgent who was shot to-night upon the sheep-walk; and you have deep cause to shudder at the menace of that ruffian Shanahan, for he is the other, and he inherits all the dark intensity of feeling and the savage fire which were so remarkable in his parent. A close family affection existed between him and his brother, who, being of a lighter, gayer, and not less spirited character,

was the darling of his mother, and of his brother also. But you have nothing to apprehend from the resentment of that ruffian, for I have him on the hip beyond all power of escape already."

"How is that?" I asked, observing Dalton pause.

"You will know," said he, "in a few days."

"And what do they suppose to have been the fate of this Shanahan's father, the parricide, as you have called him?"

"Self destruction was for many years the general supposition, but within the last four, a letter arrived at the next post town, directed to Mortimer Shanahan, late of the — Regiment, and franked from the War Office, on His Majesty's Service. This circumstance, though it has furnished no clue to the discovery of the missing herdsman, gave rise to the supposition that he had not in reality perished at the time, but taken

a musket and continued to serve his country perhaps until this day. Nothing farther, however, has been ascertained respecting the matter since that time."

CHAPTER V.

Our conversation was at this instant interrupted by a gentle "Hush!" from Mary, who smiled and laid her finger on her lip, glancing aside at young Dalton. We perceived by his position in his chair, and the smiling look which he cast at the ceiling, that he had been prevailed on to sing a song, which he was at this moment endeavouring to recal to his recollection. This was a tax which Henry was obliged to pay in almost every

company in which he mingled, for he possessed a sweet voice, and frequently, as in the present instance, used it to grace verses of his own composition. I found the song the other day among my poor daughter's papers :—

I.

A gray shifting eye, like the swift ray of light
The first May morning shoots o'er the brow of the night,
That is veiled up in mist like that eye in its lid,
Yet is loved for the promise of light that is hid.
Ah, trust [illegible] for though gentle it seems,
It is but the will that has shrouded its beams ;
It has fire, it has love, it has smiles, it has tears,
For the world and its passions, its sorrows and fears.

II.

A voice, like a sound heard in deep solitude ;
Like the song of the night-bird alone in the wood ;
A melody, struck by the finger of Art
From the small strings that tremble round Nature's own heart.
Ah, hear not that voice !—for though softly it breathe,
Its tones round the trusting heart cunningly wreathe,
When chain'd through its pulses, and bound for a spoil,
It may throb at the cheat, but must pine in the toil.

III.

A brow that is built for the throne of the mind,
And curtain'd by dark ringlets gracefully twined,
The glance of the falcon, the gaze of the dove,
The smile that is blended of mirth and of love ;
A shape, soft and gliding, like those which arise
Through the shadows of Time on the young poet's eyes,
When the cloud of the future he toils to remove,
And fancy the maiden who shall be his love.

IV.

Ah, the days of her youth are for ever gone by,
Yet the spring tide of genius is young in her eye.
Fast over her beauties the parting years roll,
Still they bloom with the evergreen h[illegible] the soul.
The rose leaves fall silently down from her cheek,
Still it hath the dear meaning Time never can break ;
And each act of her motion an impulse reveals
Of a spirit that thinks, and a bosom that feels.

V.

Even such was my love, and, in merrier hours,
I filled my bright vase with Hope's loveliest flowers,
Young Fancy flew over my bower of peace,
And soar'd in the golden clouds, singing of bliss.
But vain was my dream ! for these hours are fled,
That song, it is silent, that bower is dead,
The gold coloured mists of life's morning are flown,
My vase it is broken, my flowers are gone !

VI.

Yet blame me not, lady, if thus, while I dwell
On a form that my memory has treasured too well;
An idol, my faith would make all but divine,
I should breathe out one heart-broken sigh at its shrine.
I look on thy state, and I think on mine own,
And I laugh at the hope that would bid me love on;
Yet my reason asks "Why do I love thee?" in vain,
While my heart can but echo "I love thee!" again.

In the course of the evening, the liveliness and bonhommie of Dalton's conversation, his free, open, unconstrained, yet gentlemanly manner, and his intimate knowledge of the world, (rather indicated, than displayed, in his general demeanour) completely fastened him on my esteem. He gained more rapidly on my admiration, likewise, as I conceived his manner to be a somewhat broad copy of that which distinguished the most elegant man I had ever known, my offended brother-in-law; and which almost satisfied me of the truth of an observation I had heard made by many men of the world, that

"an Irish gentleman is the first gentlemn on earth." The reason, (supposing it any more than a national boast) might perhaps be found in that habitual frankness and gaiety which gives them all the air, step, and port of elder brothers; and in the abject condition of their peasantry which leaves them more of the lordly feeling and consciousness of feudal authority than is found in other and happier countries.

The same resemblance that struck me was considered still more striking by my wife, whose extreme youth at her marriage had not occasioned her to forget any circumstance of her brother's disposition or manner. She was the more pleased with the society of Dalton on discovering that he possessed a somewhat cultivated taste, and talked without affectation, and with a freedom and easy decision which showed him to be a perfect master of the subject, on most of her favourite authors. But his son Henry fascinated us all. Handsome, gay, and tender,

in his demeanour, he seemed an Apollo to the ladies, while his politeness and docility were no less agreeable to his superiors in years. A vulgar observer might have called him proud, for the consciousness of much talent, joined with a noble figure and fine accomplishments, had given him a lofty air from which mean spirited persons recoiled in fear and anxiety. But his was not pride. It was not that paltry and contemptible passion (if it may be elevated to the dignity of passion) which manifests itself in a tone of ridiculous haughtiness towards others, and which is always conjoined with a private sense of inferiority of one kind or another. It was a frank and generous expression, the result of a cordial fulness of soul, of mounting spirits, of natural rectitude of feeling, and of an inspiring consciousness of the grandeur of his own nature that shone in all his language and demeanour.

For our greater security, as well against

the violence of Shanahan, as against the machination of the gang to which the perished youth belonged, Dalton proposed that I should keep in my house a number of Police sufficient to withstand any attack that might be made. I might, at the same time, he said, make use of these men for the purpose of patrolling the country, and distinguishing myself in the eyes of government; no vain endeavour, at a time when place and pension were scattered with a liberal hand on all who made their loyalty conspicuous. He pledged himself, at the same time, to use all his influence for the promotion of my interests, and promised, in the zeal of his gratitude, that they should ever supersede his own. I sighed, while I gave my assent to his arrangement, and he asked me "wherefore?"

"I will confess to you my weakness," answered I. "I feel a peculiar reluctance to take this new character upon me. I have

hitherto lived a quiet and popular life amongst my tenants, and like not the idea of appearing before them now under a harsher and less parental character. Besides, my wife, my wife's family, and my daughter, are all Roman Catholic, and I feel a dislike, which my affections forbid my casting off, to do anything that might seem to indicate a want of respect for their opinions. The poor cottagers on my ground look up to my gentle Mary as their protector. The want of connection between our church and the people who are compelled to support it, has left no room for confidence in the mercy of protestant masters, and I have frequently overheard a poor man, while I sat in the parlour, and the door has been standing open, overwhelming my wife with blessings, and thanking heaven for "sending her to reign over them, when they thought the'yd be lost without one to speak for them to the masther." Mary, too, is fond

of the influence which she has thus obtained, and, mild and uncomplaining as she is, would, I think, be deeply pained by any attempt to take it out of her hands. I may say, indeed, as the Greek statesman said of Athens, that my wife governs me, and I govern Cushlane Beg."

"Well," said Dalton, "if you choose to retain an ideal popularity, among a set of ruffians who would cut your throat, or shoot you from behind a hedge after they have fawned upon and flattered you, rather than secure your family in affluence, and place yourself above the reach of their malice, why, I have not another word to say, except that you and Themistocles are two very admirable people. But if you wish to do yourself a service, I repeat it, I am at hand, and I am your friend. I, who neither love nor fear the people. I make no secret of it. I think them a base, fawning, servile, treacherous,

smooth-tongued, and black-hearted race of men; bloody in their inclinations, debauched and sensual in their pleasures, beasts in their cunning, and beasts in their appetites. They are a disgusting horde, from first to last. I enquire not into causes and effects; I weigh not the common cant of misrule and ignorance; I look not into historical influences; I speak of the men as I find them, and act by them as such. It is nothing to me that Orson, the beast, was once Orson, my brother. I treat him as a beast while he continues so, and as my brother when he resumes the form and manner of a man. I hate the people. I hate their fair professions and shameless hypocrisy, their affected simplicity and real cunning, their disgusting protestations of forgiveness, and their deep and long cherished schemes of murder and revenge. I hate the whole race as heartily as they hate me, and have no popularity to acquire or to pursue. If you would have a

favourable specimen of this abominable caste, take him, whose career of crime and midnight murder was brought this evening to a close. He was one of those unhappy characters whom a bad education, poverty, and a fierce and ignorant enthusiasm, consign, in countless numbers, to an untimely and ignominious grave, in Ireland. So pitiable is the blindness, so vain and chimerical the schemes of those wretched men, that I heard, only a few days since, that this young man had endeavoured to qualify his actual and present poverty, in the eyes of his "sweetheart," by informing her that after the country was in their own hands, Cushlane Beg and Abel Tracy's farm was to be given to him for his share of the conquest, and that she'd then be as great a lady as Mary Regan herself. For they feel a pleasure in thus distinguishing Mrs. Tracy, by her popish and maiden appellation. Whether, as is frequently the case in higher classes, the lady might have

lent a favourable ear to her suitor in consideration of his "great expectations," is a question which his untimely fate must leave for ever undecided."

Here, as if wishing to terminate the conversation, he suddenly turned round to his son and said :—

"Henry, was that long song you gave us while ago of your own composition?"

"It was, sir," said Henry, with a blush and smile.

"Then I am sorry," said the father, "that for once I am unable to congratulate you on your taste."

"Why so, sir?"

"Ellen and I have just been telling him," said Mary "that we thought it very sweet."

"Particularly" added Ellen, "that fanciful verse about his lost delights :—

> That song it is silent, that bower is dead,
> The gold coloured mists of life's morning are flown,
> My vase, it is broken, my flowers are gone.

I think that very pretty."

"I think, sir," said Henry, "that I have a strong party against you. If Monti had carried the suffrages of the ladies with him into Lombardy, I don't think the Della Cruscans would have held out so long. But what is your criticism, sir?"

"Why," answered Dalton, "I think both the sentiment and language a great deal too fine for the simple Irish melody, to which you have adapted them. If you write for Irish music, Harry, you must accommodate your poetry to the genius of the composer. The poor whiskey drinking harper, who first sung that heart-broken gush of simple melody would have blushed to see the modest daughter of his rustic clarsech in company so very fine and

grand as your verse. If you wish to do any thing good, Harry, you must gather your inspiration from the life and scenery that surrounds you, and give Ireland, what she yet wants, a national song writer ; a Burns of the sheelings and pellices."

"What she *yet* wants !" Mary exclaimed, in surprise, holding up a volume of music which is absent from the collection of few fair performers in the British Islands.

'What she yet wants," reiterated Mr. Dalton, with an emphasis smilingly resolute. "No one that ever heard those sweet and sparkling verses which you uphold, can feel their elegance, their wit, their fineness of sentiment, and of expression, more truly than I do. But I am hardly ready to grant them the title of national songs, at least, according to my own idea of what national songs should be. The best and happiest of them, moreover, are too cultivated in style, too purely fanciful, to give real

pleasure out of the precincts of educated life. They have not enough of the *bog*, enough of plain and vigorous nature, I mean, in their composition, to find a sympathy among people whose sentiment springs warm and unrectified, (to use a truly Irish metaphor) from the heart, and has nothing in common with refinement of fancy or ingenious delicacies of conceit. What Irish songs have we that may be felt and relished in all classes so warmly as "Roy's wife," or "My ain fire-side," among our Scottish neighbours; the great charm of which is that they have all the air of improvisation, and glide into the hearts of the hearers with as little effort of reflection as the vocalists employ in their enunciation? My Irish Burns, Mrs. Tracy, should not be ashamed of the occupations of rustic life in his country, he should neither set a metaphysical paradox to the air of "The Red-haired man's wife," as Byron might do, nor take his illustrations from

Greek history, like his great contemporary. He should be spontaneous and national; and, above all, he should not devote his genius exclusively to the gratification of circles who stand so little in need of new modes of amusement. And even if he should fail in becoming fashionable, (which I doubt, for novelty in the affairs of genius seldom does,) he will still have atchieved a high, a higher glory. He will have invested the occupations of humble industry with gentle and softening associations; he will have thrown an illusive (perhaps) but yet an effectual and alleviating charm over the toils of the poor labourer, and the cares of the struggling cottager; he will have induced a feeling of gentle and virtuous contentment among the people; and, more than all, he will have banished, from their lips and their memories, those vile, vulgar, and profligate ballads, which, from the days of Edmund Spenser to our own, have been

the blot and bane of Irish cottage morals."

"And these are the people whom you hate!" said I, addressing the speaker in an under tone.

"I hate them for what they are," he replied, "but I cannot avoid seeing what would make them better. I told you I took them as I found them. But, indeed, it is in the merest Machiavelian spirit that I speak of this improvement, for I look to its influence in furthering the ends of government. It is impossible not to see the impolicy of neglecting the amusements of the people. It is the most obvious support of a deceptive mode of rule that can be imagined. If you wish to fool a child, you fling him a toy. The Cæsars (you see, Mrs. Tracy, what a fine scholar I am,) practised it amid all their tyrannies; and by it all the usurpers and despots on the earth have been able to exercise a power, with which no influence, upon the reason

of their subjects, could have invested them. But here it is not thought of at any time. Our landlords give no rural fête, to reward and encourage the industry of their tenants and promote a virtuous spirit of emulation, as some good men do in England. The poor are not thought of here; they are taxed for work and money, and then turned off to find their own amusements, if they wish for them. And this they do in good earnest, witness their jig houses, their shebeens, their benefits and balls, their drunkenness, their factious spirit, their night-walking, and all the turbulent and improvident vices of their character."

"Talking of ballads," said young Dalton, turning round in his chair, "I think a more amusing or more perfect illustration could not be presented, of the disposition and manners of this people, than a judicious selection from their own fire-side melodies. It would be

worth the report of a whole board of commissioners."

Soon after, Dalton rose to depart, and Willy, who was a favourite with him, ran to order the horses, which he had left, he said, "ating, no, eating, his oats in the steeble, no stable, and,"—finding himself only getting deeper, he scampered off, throwing back his curly head and exclaiming "Oh, I'm tired of it for English!"

Henry Dalton rode off, and we heard him, from the hall door, singing as he went along that stanza which Ellen had commended:

> But vain was my dream, for those hours are fled,
> That song it is silent, that bower is dead,
> The gold coloured mists of life's morning are flown,
> My vase it is broken, my flowers are gone!

As the father stood on the steps, with one foot in his stirrup, while little Ulick shrunk behind the open door from the damp cold wind, and sheltered the candle with his

hand, he said to me, "Remember our conversation and exert yourself. Omit no opportunity: learn to subdue your inclinations to your interests, and leave the rest to me."

I shook his hand warmly and remained wrapt in pleasing dreams upon the threshold, until the sound of his horse's steps died away, and Ulick, our pet, asked me, in a shivering, plaintive voice, "Wouldn't I come in and let him shut the door, it was so cold?"

I returned to our drawing room in silence, persuaded, in an evil hour, to rend away those bonds of attachment which had secured to me, during a long course of years, the affections of my poor dependants, and to become their enemy instead of their guardian. Thus was the keystone of my tranquil happiness removed. I felt a little uneasiness, indeed, at the idea of entertaining a number of Policemen in my house, as my domestic expenses were already as considerable as the

most economical dilatation of my income could afford, but it would have been mean and unlike an Irishman to have spoken of this embarrassment to Dalton, and besides, the loss was nothing when I considered the object in view. Dreams of golden happiness and splendour floated through my brain, and I pressed the hand of my daughter, still mourning for the absence of her betrothed; while my fancy anticipated the happiness the youthful pair would enjoy in the participation of my coming prosperity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ghastly family of the Hag's Valley haunted my imagination, in despite of all the assurances of Dalton, and made my life more anxious and feverish then it had ever been. Scarcely a night passed on which I did not look with a candle under all the beds, and frequently did I expect to meet the gloomy stare of the surviving orphan bent on me from the darkness underneath. A circumstance soon occurred to

heighten that anxiety to a degree that was almost painful.

I was returning alone in the evening of the New Year's day following, after having spent the forenoon at a neighbouring fair, and entertained myself by observing the holiday groups that were dispersed in various parts of the high road, and the improved and tastefully cultivated appearance of the young and fair cottagers, as the sun went down on the last evening of the expiring year. I turned aside into a pathway, which led, through an ancient Abbey and burying ground, to my own lawn; and stopped for a few minutes to admire the effect of the red and level light upon the ruins. It had been an Augustine Friary in the days of the famous John of Kildare, and the choir and stalls, with various other parts of its massive architecture were still in tolerable preservation. A row of Gothic windows, of elaborate sculpture, on which were escutcheons with the

English and Saltire crosses ranged alternately, fronted the declining sun, veiled from the direct influence of his rays, by a screen of wandering ivy. The massive pillars and ogives, which once supported the arch and tower, were also protected by a mantle of the same ruin-haunting shrub.

The low murmur of a female voice, speaking in the Irish tongue, and with a strong and gutteral accentuation, attracted my attention to the grave-yard. I beheld, at a few paces distant, a palsied old woman kneeling near one of the plain grass mounds or tumuli which contained the ashes of the lowly dead, and which were only distinguished by an unhewn, undecorated head-stone. She was wrapt in an old blue rug cloak and hood, having the skirts turned over her shoulders, and displaying underneath a gown of a coarse brown stuff much rent and much patched. I was shocked to discover on a nearer approach that she was preparing, according to the superstitious custom of the uninformed portion

of the people, to bestow her curse on some individual by whom she had suffered injury. She threw her hood back from her head, unpinned with trembling fingers the white kerchief beneath which her grey hair was rolled into a mass, and suffered those long, dry, straight, and lifeless locks to fall down suddenly over her face and shoulders; a common custom in uttering maledictions of peculiar solemnity and bitterness. Extending, through this unseemly veil, her thin, yellow, and skinny hands, clasped feebly together, she had aleady faltered out some words of her impious prayer, when I interrupted its progress by coming suddenly forward.

"Unhappy wretch," said I, "do you dare to break the law of the Almighty in his own temple? Have you no respect for the graves of the dead, or for the holy ground where you are standing, that you choose it as a proper place for the indulgence of your abominable passions?"

Here I stopped short, and my anger was

qualified by a mingling of pity and self reproach, when the woman, turning on me with difficulty her ghastly and blood shot eyes, discovered the countenance of the mother of Shanahan. She arose, with a laborious effort from her knees, and supported herself on a long ashen pole (resembling the *bowlthdun** or striker of a flail) which she grasped with both hands, and which yet shook pitiably under the influence of her distemper. She looked on my face with an expression of bitter hate and rage, while her cheeks, wrinkled and dragged by age and pain, acquired a flushing and a quivering redness, and her black and wind-scorched lips were drawn back with a malignant grin, so as to discover a pair of gums in which three or four discoloured and tobacco-stained dog-teeth hung loose like the prongs in an old and broken hay rake.

* From which the ancient Greeks derived the verb Βουλομαι, without any acknowledgment.

"Ay, Abel Thracy," she said, speaking in a feeble and faltering voice, and interrupting her most angry sentences by long pauses of exhaustion, "how easy 'tis—for you to come here an'—preach to me, over—my child's grave after—taking my last comfort in life—away from me. You preach forgiveness to me that showed none to mine! This very evening Shanahan, my son, was to be married to the best girl in the three parishes. I heard him often wishing for it to come, and sure it is come, an' he's lying there within an arm's length o' me in that grave, an' I talkin' to the man that murthered him. You did this for me, Abel Thracy, an' the prayer I was goin' to offer, 'till you hindhered me, was that the Almighty might do as much for you. If I had the arms or the sthrength of a man, I would'nt be talkin' to you this way. But though I'm weak, I have strong friends, an' they have you marked. You can't sthrike a

bush in the country from this day, but a friend of Shanahan will start from it against you. Ah, Abel Tracy, there is no law for the poor in Ireland, but what they make themselves, and by that law my child will have blood for blood before the year is out."

"Hag that you are!" I exclaimed, in strong passion, "you upbraid me, but you are yourself the murderer of your son. I know you. When he was an infant on your lap, you filled his mind with thoughts of revenge and discord. You sung him to sleep with songs of guilt and passion, you taught him to fight out his own will among his own brothers and play-fellows. From you, his mother, who should have softened and brought down the fierceness of his disposition by words of peace and gentleness, from you it was that he learned to foster and indulge it. From you he learned that riot and revenge were glory and honour, and that blind rebellion was patriotism. You made him

a bad child, a worse man, a factious neighbour, a rebel, a blood-spiller, and thus, having bound his soul to perdition, you became his murderer. If he could speak to you from his grave, he would address you by no other name."

"Folly on," said the hag, speaking in a shrill voice of anger, "you destroyed him for this world, and now you judge him for the next. I'll answer to heaven, and not to you, for how I reared my boy; but my prayer is in my heart, and it is little matter whether I say it or not."

She then tore her head-dress, and scattered it upon the ground,* muttering at the same time the curse which I had prevented her from pronouncing aloud. After this, she turned away with the sullen and vengeful air of one discomfited and conscience-struck, but fortified against conviction, and tottered out of the church-yard in so feeble a manner that one

* A customary form of imprecation.

might have said it was hardly worth her while to leave a place to which she must so soon return.

The threat, however, which she had thrown out was sufficient to alarm and startle me. I knew the temper of the people, and this intimation of their intentions rendered me somewhat feverish and dyspeptical during the ensuing weeks. I was careful never to go from home without arms, and as seldom as possible without my Police. This anxiety of mind preyed upon my spirits and rendered me peevish, silent, oppressive, and impatient, to all around me. I began to feel some portion of Dalton's hatred of the people. My wife, indeed, was miserable. Dalton had not yet repaid my daughter's portion; he seemed on the contrary to be growing poorer every day, and as I knew that poor young Rowan Clancy would not be permitted to espouse a wife entirely dowerless, the agony of my apprehension was intolerable. To have it

known that I had robbed my own child! the plunderer of my sweet, gentle girl! It was too horrible. When I thought of it, I started from my seat, and hurrying into the open air, ran all over my now half-ruined farm in a torture of suspense and terror.

Still, amid all my agonies and my solicitudes, the brilliant phantoms of ambition would flit before my imagination and make my heart drunk with unreal ecstacies.

Would to Heaven that I had never dreamed of this! that I had remained still ignorant of the thirst for wealth and influence! that I were still contented to let my desires keep pace with the even course of Nature herself! that they had, like her, year after year their spring of reasonable hope, their summer of certain promise, their autumn of calm fruition, and their winter of cold and unsolicitous repose! That I were still content to receive money for the mere purpose of counting and

paying it away! That I were again the happy man I have been, above want, below luxury, without a hoard, and without a debt, cheerful at my fire-side, free-hearted in my chamber, and even tempered in society; beloved by my friends and my dependents, not feared, but liked; not envied, but esteemed!

Such were the thoughts, that in moments of musing and forgetfulness would steal through my heart, and shed a gentle sorrow over it, But they never found their way to my tongue, and were even treated as feeble and foolish dreams which my waking consciousness repelled. The only sentence with which I closed my meditations was usually this involuntary one:

"I wonder when will Dalton pay me back the money?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE week after that on which I met the wicked widow, comprised the quarterly review day of a corps of yeomanry to which I belonged. It was to be held near the village of A——, one of the most romantic spots in the south of Ireland, which lay within an easy morning's ride of my house. This village is of an older date than Dublin, it had the honour of being laid waste by the Danes, the

Spaniards, the English, and others, at various periods; and it is one of the few districts which continued to maintain a regular corps of yeomanry down to a late date. In this respectable and warlike legion I had the honour of holding the commission of Lieutenant, a station which I maintained with unblemished reputation for the space of twelve years. It is true, that, during that time, the exigencies of the state were not sufficiently alarming to afford us an opportunity of distinguishing ourselves in action, in such a manner as the ardour of our patriotism would lead us to desire, but if we never achieved conquests, we could, at least, affirm with truth that we never sustained the ignominy of defeat. After the introduction of the Police, indeed, we merely took the field on stated review days, occurring four times within the year, when we went through our manœuvres, received a day's pay each, which we drank to the king's health in the evening,

interweaving onr moderate libations with tales of our past achievements, and lamentations on our present state of inaction. Still, however, on these four days, we endeavoured to sustain our ancient credit. It is true, that, previous to the firing of the first volley, a recollection of the ill condition of our muskets, the rusty state of the barrels from long disuse, and the consequent danger of their bursting in our hands, would flash upon our minds, and make the stoutest heart grow cold. But this was only the depression of a moment, the bending of the bow for the spring, the gathering of the breath for the onset, and all our valour returned after the first discharge.

This, our first quarterly review day after the proclamation of the Insurrection Act, fell in the midst of winter, at a time when the disturbances of the country had reached an alarming height. The morning rose bright with sunshine, and clear and biting with frost. We met,

indeed, not under the most pleasing circumstances that we could wish. It was found that scarcely two dozen serviceable stand of musquetry could be numbered amongst our whole corps, the remainder being deficient either in locks, stocks, or barrels. Resolved, however, to make up in discipline what was wanted in equipments, our men assembled with spirit, and proceeded to the ground, an open space in the demesne of A——, by a road which ran in front of the Police Barracks. Taking care to suffer the best appointed of our heroes to constitute that file which was most exposed to the observation of their rivals, we rattled up Lord Hardwick's march with fife and drum, and strutted away, determined, at all events, not to furnish a temptation to ridicule, by sneaking along as if we had anticipated and deserved it. Notwithstanding our brave bearing, nevertheless, the Police, (a party newly arrived, who knew nothing of us or of the neighbour-

hood,) were at little pains to suppress their sneers; and their jibes and laughter, as they stood scattered in the sunshine in front of their barracks, were loud enough to be heard by the whole corps.

But our annoyances did not rest here. The little ragged rabble who accompanied us caught up the spirit of the jest, and, being less restrained by considerations of self respect, gave a loose to their malice, and followed us to the ground with loud shouts of laughter and shrill hallooings of derision. When the corps formed into line, and thus exposed the total inefficiency of their warlike stores, I do not think a young comic writer would be displeased if his first piece gave so much entertainment. In vain did we endeavour to complete the effect of the scanty volley, by drowning it in the reiterations of the immeasureable huzza—the spectacle was too ludicrous to pass with impunity, and we left the ground (receiving one day's pay) co-

vered with ridicule and filled with a just indignation.

But I should relate an incident which perplexed me in an unaccountable manner. While our men were firing at the sign-board of a neighbouring public house, put up as a target, I observed an old man leaning over the bridge, dressed in a ragged military uniform, wearing a long beard, "a sable silvered," looking singularly haggard in the eyes and mouth, and lonesome and dreary in his whole appearance. Observing him smile, as the men fired and missed in succession, and more annoyed at his still contempt than at the vulgar hooting of the populace, I asked him whether he thought he could do better himself if he were among them? Without making any reply, he instantly came down upon the field, as if I had invited him to try his hand. I bade Sergeant Swan hand him a carbine.

The old soldier, untying his knap-sack

laid it carefully upon the grass, and then taking the carbine in his hand, paused a moment and gazed upon the piece with a fond eye and a hard but expressive smile.

"This is an innocent piece," he said, speaking in an accent which had the querulous Kerry accént, modified by the shortness of the barrack emphasis. He said so, pointing to the word "*Tower,*" and the date of the preceding year, which where engraved on the barrel.

Lifting the piece to his eye, he fired. The man near the target raised his hand and cried out with astonishment:

"In the bull's eye, that I mightn't!"

A loud shout of applause burst from the populace. The old soldier smiled with satisfaction; but quickly relapsing into his habitually lonesome stare, took up his knapsack again, and throwing it over his shoulder, left the field without speaking to any body.

When we were assembled in the small inn where we proposed concluding the exploits of the day, by expending each man his quota "for the good of the house," I enquired privately of Mc Gawyl, the landlord, if he knew any thing of the old man?

"Nothing," said this person, who piqued himself on being a very precise and grammatical speaker,—"only this; that he landed out of a West Indiaman that dropped anchor over yonder, a few days since, and come ashore with a tall yellow gentleman that nobody knows. The both of 'em came here one night, an' the place being crowded, I was obliged to lodge the old sodger in a chair be the kitchen fire, while the yellow gentleman slep in the room overhead.

"He is gone off now," continued Mc Gawyl, "to spend the night in some ould fabric of a ruin or another. There's something or another lying on his mind. The night I gave him a lodgin'

here, I came down late at night to look afther everything, an' he was sitting this way with his head restin' back again' the wall, an' every now and then he'd start out of his sleep as if there was fifty people callin' to him to get up, an' then seeing nobody, he'd give a great groan, an' spread his hands over the fire, an' look back shiverin' over his shouldther, an' settle himself to sleep again. But hardly ever I hear him talk to any body. Sometimes, too, when he'd start out of his sleep, you'd hear him sayin' this way, in a great flusther—I didn't!—it wasn't I!—I did'nt!"

Old Clancy, our captain, Mr. Lorenzo Doody, our second lieutenant, (a great disciplinarian, who used to brush his eyebrows against the grain, in order to make them stand out, and give a military fierceness to his countenance), Mr. Paul Hifle, our ensign, a great drinker and story-teller, and possessed of a fine talent in describing an entertainment, remained, with one or two others to

see the sun down with the men. Sargeant Swan arranged a small deal table across the fire-place somewhat in the fashion of a daïs, at which we took our places, Captain Clancy planting himself under a brightly coloured print of Moses in the bull-rushes, which hung immediately over the chimney piece.

The evening passed away unfelt, until the clear moonlight was shining through the window of the room in which we sat, so brightly as almost to eclipse the lustre of our landlord's candles. The greater number of the company had long since left the house, empty chairs stood awry at the table, the candles seemed about to expire for want of snuffing, and the few persons that remained were conversing with red dull eyes in a drowsy tone over their glasses.—The street of the village was still and empty, and we could only occasionally hear the lonely echo of some footstep upon the frosty road, and the sulky challenge of the police sentinels, as it approached their posts. Doody had

fallen asleep with his hands thrust into the pockets of his nether garment, and his chin reposing among the involutions of his shirt frills, Mc Gawyl had gradually insinuated himself into one of the deserted chairs, and possessed himself of a tumbler, which he at first laid hold of as an illustration in speaking of the conduct of the police, and presently appropriated to a less figurative use.

Suddenly we were all startled by a noise at the street door, which was more like a pounding, or a malletting, than a knocking.

Mc Gawyl, in compliance with my desire, threw up the window, and was immediately accosted by a voice without, which we all recognized as that of the Chief Constable of the obnoxious police.

"Are you an inmate of this house?" he asked in a loud tone.

"An inmate!" echoed Mc Gawyl, "mind that though! I'm standin' frontin' him in the

window here, an' he asks me it I'm an inmate of the house? Is it lookin' for powdther you're goin' again, that you keep me here answerin' you in the cowld?"

Here he puckered up the epidermis of his nose, as a half frozen drop fell on the rosy and jocund apex of that feature.

"Hold your tongue, fellow," said the Chief, "and answer my questions."

"An' with submission to you," replied Mc Gawyl, holding up the sash of the window, with both hands, while he looked over his shoulder and twisted his countenance significantly at us, "how *will* I answer your kusthins, if I'm to hold my tongue?"

A fresh battery of musquet butts upon the outside of the door was the retort of the Policemen, and our host suddenly bursting into anger, uttered a vehement remonstrance against this uncouth procedure:

"What do you want at all with us, or what

are we doin' to ye? Can't ye speak at wonst?"

"Are all your family at home?"

"No."

"Where are they?"

"There's one of 'em missin'."

"Has he a pass?"

"Faix, I did'nt ax him; nor he would n't tell me if I did, for the rogue knew he was goin' thresspassin'. But if you want to find the thief, step up to the pound tomorrow morning, an' you'll find him grunting on the stones."

"Is it a pig you're talking of?"

"Oh, murther! murther! what a guess he has."

"Scoundrel, open the door."

"Himself an' the ould gandher that went out rovin' afther sunset this evenin'; if you'd make a prisoner o' the gandher for me, I'd say you were doin' some good, an' I don't know whose bidden the gander would mind if not the goose's —well, no matther; its all one."

Thunder again at the door.

"What ails ye, death-an-ownkadeers," shouted the incensed publican, "isn't there the list pasted up upon the doore before ye'r eyes, an' the moon shinin', an' I'm sure ye're all fine scholars, every man, though I b'lieve ye've more letthers than manners, indeed, if the truth was known."

The Chief accordingly applied his attention to the written list of names, which, while the Insurrection act was in force, was pasted up on the door of every house.

"Thade Mc Gawyl!" he shouted aloud.

"Here! above you in the windy!" was the instant response.

"Mary Delahunty!" continued the Chief.

"Here!" shrilled out a cracked female voice from a hurdle loft at the far end of the house.

"Dick Mc Gawyl! Nanny Mc Gawyl! Thade Preston! &c. &c." "Here! here! here!" were responded from different quarters of the house in voices sharp, high, and low, reminding

the hearer of the muster-roll of Hecate in Macbeth.

"Very well! Now put out your lights!" said the Chief.

"Put out our lights!"

"Put them out; or we'll save you the trouble. We have orders to see all lights out, and if you don't comply, I shall beat in the door."

"And what would ye say, now, if there was a parcel of gentlemen yeomen, the king's servants, here, drinkin' the king's health wit me?"

"So ho! the secret's out at last!" cried the Chief, "you have strangers with you. I thought so. Come, open the door, and let me have the pleasure of seeing their loyal faces. I'm not to be gulled with a story of the A—— yeomanry stopping to get drunk at your house at a time when all good subjects should be in their beds."

To save the pannels of the slender door, they were admitted. I perceived, at once, by the leer-

ing twinkle of the Chief's eye as he perused the faces and persons of the company, that he had resolved upon some piece of insolence or waggery, or both.

"Yeomanry—hum!—They have got the sheeps' clothing indeed,"—[the word sheep was accented with a peculiar emphasis,]—but that is a jacket, Master Mc Gawyl, that will fit a wolf as well. Better be sure than sorry, is an old saying that's not the worse for wear. If these gentlemen, [another emphasis] be the yeomanry in fact and truth, they know the new law, I suppose, and have got their passes about them."

"What pass would you be axin' beyont the ridgimentals?" said Mc Gawyl.

"Don't you think," answered the Chief, casting an insolently inquisitive eye on an envious rent which time had made in the elbow of Sergeant Fizzel's coat," that a croppy could fit himself at half price off the pegs of the

Parade* with as handsome a suit of raggedmentals as this gentleman's?"

Here he applied his fore-finger and thumb to the fissure just hinted at, and pulled through it part of an intimate garment, which, to the shame of our corps be it spoken, was not the whitest nor finest that we could wish. There was something so delicate and poignant in the witticism, that the Policemen could hardly keep their gravity, and I even saw Mc Gawyl himself smothering a laugh in the hollow of his hand.

Sergeant Fizzel, though placed nearly in the same circumstances as Papirius, seemed not inclined however to risk the fate of that famous legislator, by imitating his ineffectual gallantry. At first, indeed, he looked very big — then glanced at the insulter—then at his sleeve—then at the horse pistol which his foe held in his hand—and then he drew a very long breath, and pulled in the garment.

* The Monmouth Street of a neighbouring city.

We all now remonstrated, but without effect. "I have orders," said the Chief, "to take up every body I find out after sunset, without a magistrate's pass. I know nothing of you, or of this neighbourhood, and I must see your passes, or you shan't pass me."

"We have no passes," said Clancy, "and depend upon it, your insolence shan't pass us."

"I understand you. Come along, my clever fellows, I'll find you a lodging until morning. March down stairs before us if you please."

"If we had our arms," said Doody, buttoning up his coat with an expedition indicative of deep indignation.

"If you had, what of it?" said the Chief sternly.

"If we had," replied the latter, in a softer tone, "it would, I hope, demonstrate the truth of what we allege."

"I don't know that," replied the other,

sulkily, "unless you could show me how you came by them. Go along down before me or by——" he swore a horrid oath, "I'll put a button under your belt, my young fugleman."

By this epithet, I perceived, the man knew Doody, and was bent upon executing his freak. I accordingly took Clancy's arm, and walked forward, resolving, in my own mind, to make the young gentleman pay for his amusement as dearly as ever sport was purchased.

"Come!" he repeated tapping the table and looking impatiently at Purtill, who still kept his seat.

"I'm no pippin squeezer," returned Purtill coolly, "and I'll not leave my glass unfinished." So saying he drained it with a scrupulous exactness.

"Most loyal Chief!" he then added, while he entwined his fingers closely around the neck of a quart bottle, containing a portion of Mc Gawyl's best proof spirits. "Since this has been the

cause of our delinquency, I trust you will think it only fair that it should share our imprisonment. Take my word for it, that however fiery the fellow is now," he added shaking the bottle gently and tenderly as he deposited it in his great coat pocket, "his *spirits* will be brought low enough before morning."

"You are a pleasant fellow," said the Police man, "come along."

"The yeomen taken up undher the Act!" I heard Mc Gawyl ejaculate as he stood at the open door-way, gazing after us. "O murther! murther! what'll the Peelers do next, I wondher? If the Parliament itself was there, I b'lieve it would n't escape ye afther that. Hallo! Misther Skerrit!"

"Well, what do you want?" said the Chief, turning his head, after we had gone half way up the street.

"There's Jim Flanagan's head out apast his dooreway, above sthreet, afther sunset an' all.

Cut it off, an' carry it to Bridewell with ye, an' I'll swear again it at the sessions; an' ye may do it with a safe conscience, too, for his head would be no loss to his family, whatever the legs an' hands might be."

We marched on, and were lodged in the cold bridewell, the key was turned in the door, and we were left to look into one another's faces and long for the dawn.

Purtill endeavoured to keep us alive by singing the following song, while we took a part in the chorus, rather in order to show that we would not be depressed by Skerrit's malice, than from any actual gaiety of spirits:

1.

Would you choose a friend? Attend! attend!
I'll teach you how to attain your end.
He, on whose lean and bloodless cheek
The red grape leaves no laughing streak,
On whose dull, white brow and clouded eye,
Cold thought and care sit heavily,
Him you must flee,
'Tween you and me,
That man is very bad company.

And he around whose jewelled nose
The blood of the red grape freely flows,
Whose pursy frame, as he fronts the board,
Shakes like a wine-sack newly stored,
In whose half-shut, moist, and sparkling eye,
The wine-god revels cloudily,
Him you must flee,
'Tween you and me,
That man is very bad company.

III.

But he who takes his wine in measure,

Here Purtill quaffed off his own glass, without adding half a second to the time.

Mingling wit and sense with pleasure,
Who likes good wine for the joy it brings,
And merrily laughs and gaily sings;
With heart and bumper always full,
Never maudlin, never dull,
Your friend let him be,
'Tween you and me,
That man is excellent company.

But we would have sung with a better heart if they had not caged us.

CHAPTER VIII.

It appeared soon after that Skerrit had discovered his mistake, for a sergeant of Police arrived to open the doors, and to inform us that we were at liberty. The insult offered, however, was too glaring to be so easily forgotten, and we sent back the man to say, that he must come himself and make a formal apology for his conduct. "As loyal men they had gone in, and as loyal men they should come out," said Doody.

The man went back, and soon after we heard a horseman slowly pacing up to the bridewell door. He dismounted, and we heard him soon after humming a song, as he paced to and fro in the moonlight, and seemed to pay no more attention to the cold, than if he were an Esquimaux, or had been to the Pole at least. We listened attentively, and could distinguish the following words, sung with much taste and sweetness :—

1.

Let others breathe in glowing words
The secret of their bosom-pain,
And bid the loud harp's speaking chords
Tell o'er the weary tale again.
From me no burning strain shall rise,
A cold heart's answering sigh to move,
But I will gaze upon those eyes,
And waste away in silent love.

He then stamped two or three times on the road, whistled, hummed a little, and commenced a second verse :—

II.

I cannot find in art a strain
To echo forth mine inward moan,
If sighs and looks can't tell my pain,
Oh, never shall my love be known.
Safe is the flame, whose wavering wreath
A tear may quench, a sigh can move,
But full of danger and of death
Is the pent fire of silent love.

"A charming night he has chosen for a serenade," said Purtill.

"Hush!" said another, "he's going to give us another verse."

"No, he's only humming over the last, his wit is run aground."

"That's strange," said Purtill, "for, to judge by his melody, and the time he chose for singing it, he had no more than would have floated in any shallow."

"Speak to him, Tom," said Clancy, "you are safe here."

Purtill went to the barred window and threw up the sash.

"A fine night for vocal music, sir," he said aloud.

"You are very good, sir," replied the stranger.

"I hope you don't find your voice at all affected by the frost, sir?"

"By no means, sir."

"Perhaps, sir, you would take something to clear it, and favour us with an additional stanza. Da capo, if you please. I have got a balsam here that I call the "pippin squeezer's best friend," or the "sick lover's walking-stick." Now your silent love is a great deal too washy an affair for me, it is just punch without spirits, the sweet and the weak. The strong is here in my hand, and if you will accept a little I think it will give you some spirit. Here's some whiskey, sir. You can make grog of it, as they do in the County Clare."

"How is that?"

"Why, by drinking all the whiskey now and the water to-morrow, or after."

"You are very good again," said the other, "I'll take a little, if you please."

Purtill handed him a glass through the bars. He took it and, at the same time drawing Purtill's arm through with a sudden force, and bringing his face close to the bars, dealt him a great blow on the nose, exclaiming "Upon my word, sir, you are right, for (another blow) I begin to find myself getting a little spirit already."

"The deuce you are," cried Purtill, endeavouring to return the blow, but without success, for his eyes were both bewildered, and he only broke his fingers, against the bars, "you scoundrel, I wish I knew your name."

"You will find it on this card," said the other, "as soon as you are able to read, for, indeed, I think without a little of the "sick lover's walking-stick" they can't bear the light for

some time. I wish you a good night, sir, and pray apply to me when you want to make grog again."

He rode off, leaving Purtill in a rage, which our general laughter did not tend to diminish. The name which he found upon the card, and which I had already anticipated from the tone of the voice, was that of Mr. Henry Dalton. He instantly determined upon sending him a message, and bespoke Lorenzo Doody, as his second.

"Well, Purtill;" said I, "that gentleman is able to do something besides singing silent love."

He was about to answer this speech with great passion, when the sergeant of Police returned, to say that his Chief would see us all hanged, (he used a worse word) rather than make us any apology. He then departed, leaving the door open, and calling the bridewell-keeper to witness that there was no restriction left upon us.

We maintained our resolution, however, with a firmness worthy of the most famous martyrs to public principle. But it was a cold night, and there was no fire in the house. As the first paroxysms of our zeal subsided, and the disagreeableness of our situation began to press more sharply upon our feelings, a ludicrous degree of indecision manifested itself in our demeanour. Some cast bashful and sidelong glances at the open door, thought of the blazing turf that burned on their hearths at home, and strove to call the blood into their frost-bitten toes and fingers by breathing into the hollow of their hands, squeezing them under their arms, and between their knees, beating, "Go to bed, Tom," with their feet and various other artifices. They began at last to hang their heads with a secret suspicion that their conduct was rather ludicrous than heroic.

"Well," said Doody, "let him do as he pleases. Even at common law we have our

redress by laying an action for false imprisonment."

" False imprisonment, sir!" ejaculated Sergeant Swan, who was thrashing himself fiercely with both arms in another corner, " why then, with submission sir, this is what I call rale imprisonment—unless indeed it be made out false imprisonment in regard o' lavin' the doore open."

" I wisht we had a lighted pipe itself," said one of the men.

" Could'nt you get a sod or two, an' the seed o' the fire over at Jim Flanagan's?" asked another, " dear knows, we'll be perished here before mornin'."

" I think I'll just step out and stamp my feet a little on the road abroad," said Purtill, who had been gradually enlarging the circuit of his perambulations in the little room, and now, suiting the action to the word, stepped across the threshold and into the free and glorious moonshine. And we heard him stamp and stamp, until

he stamped himself home to bed and out of our hearing.

The man who was despatched for the "seed o' the fire," found a happier resting place, for he returned not to his companions in duresse. Sergeant Swan went after him; but the event made us think "our swan a crow," likewise. Clancy went home to let his family know where he was. Doody himself muttered a sentence or two about the duty of a soldier, and insinuated that he had a few stacks of white lammas to thresh in the morning, which would oblige him to be up at the "first light." In a word, on the strength of some sudden recollection which occurred to all of us, the bridewell was as empty as a drunkard's pocket when the police returned.

"Tell me," said Clancy, after I had overtaken him on the road, (for he walked on foot) "do you think this duel will take place between Purtill and young Dalton?"

"I am certain of it," said I, "for Dalton is

jealous of his reputation, although indeed it would suffer little by his declining a meeting with Purtill."

"Why so?"

"He is somewhat of a fire-eater."

"Pooh!"

"And not the very pink of respectability neither. He is a true wild Irishman; drinks for the mere enjoyment of the headlong state of mind it causesand lives upon the excitement of continual danger. He is in debt with every body that he could ever get to trust him—his breast is like a riddle from bullet-scars received in single combat—he has been tried for assaults innumerable, and is as familiarly known in the wards of the County Gaol as on his own farm. He nas got a relative in the Indies, of great wealth, whose property he expects to inherit, and to whose speedy demise he drinks a bumper every night of his existence."

"I heard it said that he once proposed for Miss Tracy?"

"And so he did."

"Assurance!"

"It was met as such, and the poor fellow stormed a little, for I believe he really loved her. But we made him merry for a few nights and sent him home in good humour."

Our roads divided here, and I proceeded home alone. I had not gone far, when I perceived our family piper, Phil Fogarty, riding towards me in evident perturbation. It was the first time I had seen him since my change of life, for he had taken alarm one evening at Dalton's asking him to play "Croppies lie down;" and the nasal squeal of his chaunter was no longer heard from his modest recess behind the parlour door.

"Well Phil," said I, "what's the matter with you?"

"Is that the masther that's there?"

"It is."

"Oh, masther, a 'ra gal, I'm spoilt entirely with the fright?"

"From what, Phil."

"There's somethin' that's not good in the ould church, beyond——I seen a light an' I passin'!"

"A light in the church?"

"Oh, that I may be grey if I did'nt, with my two eyes, as plain as I see that moon above us."

"Did you go to the church to look in?"

"Me! Eyeh! Faix, I'm sure that I did'nt. I thought every foot o' the road was a mile 'till I was at this side o' the hill. But I'd go back with your honour, if you're for goin' that way, for I'm not a bit afeerd when I have company."

We turned back, and tying our horses at the road side, took our way softly through the fields to the same old ruin in which I had met the aged and vindictive mother of the Shanahans.

I saw a light shooting in wiry streams through

one of the apertures in the wall of what was once the wine cellar of the Abbey. It was now a damp and dismal vault, dimly lighted and strewed with planks of mouldering coffins, and remains of a still ghastlier description. I crept softly to an end window and beheld, within, a picture that stimulated my curiosity in an extraordinary degree.

An old man was seated at the far end on a pile made up of the broken coffin boards, covered with straw and arranged in the manner of a bed. Two mouldering lids, placed crosswise, served for the head and foot boards. A fire burned close to the wall at a little distance. On a projecting stone in the wall, fastened by a lump of clay instead of a candle stick, burned a small candle, and near it were hung a vial, which I supposed to contain holy water, and a rosary of rude beads, made from the vertebræ of fishes. It is so common a circumstance in the country parts of Ireland to find pilgrims thus taking up their abode in the mouldering testimonials of the monastic greatness

of our island, that I should not have paid more attention to the scene than its picturesque effect might challenge, if it had not been for another circumstance. The dress and countenance of the old man were those of the soldier who had put us to shame at the review.

He was fast asleep; his head resting against the wall, and his hands clasped upon his lap. I was about to creep from my hiding place, with the view of entering the vault, and getting into conversation with the stranger, when the sound of a footstep falling near arrested my attention. A tall figure, muffled closely up, passed us in the moonlight. By his manner of peeping in, and his surprise at seeing what we had seen before, I judged him to be a stranger, attracted, as we had been, by the light from the vault.

The first movement of the new comer, on entering the wine-cellar, was to move with languid steps towards the fire, and stoop over it with a look of extreme chilliness. He was a tall, wiry

figure, dressed with a richness that betokened rank and wealth, slightly made, and standing feebly on his limbs. A handsome surtout, with cuffs and collar of rich sable, gloves well furred and lined, lambs-wool wrists, and a seals-kin travelling cap, carefully brought down over the ears, constituted the principal articles of his costume.

After he had warmed himself at the fire, he walked towards the old man, and stooped downward to look into his face. That face appeared to me, even at the distance at which I stood, to have undergone a singular alteration since I first beheld it. It was gathered at the lips, with an expression of ghastly fear, and the grisly hair was thrown back, with a disturbed appearance, from his brow. When the stranger touched his shoulder, in order to wake him, he started on a sudden wide awake, and spoke in hurried whispers some incoherent sentences.

"Do not fear," said the stranger, in a languid voice, "I am not your enemy. Are not

you the old soldier who made the voyage from the Indies with me?"

The old soldier, still much confused, looked on him with face upturned and terrified.

"I remember you, sir," he said at last; "you were good to me on board the ship."

"Why are you here at this hour?"

"I have no other lodging."

"Is it possible you cannot afford the price of a bed?"

"The Almighty forgive me, sir, it is not that. But I am well lodged here, too well for what I deserve. I have prayers to say, and penance to do for a bad life, an' I had rather do it here by myself, where my mind would'nt be taken away from it, than in a dwelling house."

"But 'tis a gloomy life. What can you have to wash away, that would require so dreary a mode of atonement?"

"Phil Fogarty," whispered I to the piper

who lay near me on the ground, " it is not fitting you should hear this discourse. Go over to my house, and I will follow you."

"Oh, that the sighth may never leave me masther, but I dare'nt stir a foot without you, sir."

" Well, don't listen, then. If they are plotting any thing, it is fitter I should hear it than you."

" I'll lie down here an' cover my two ears with my hands, so that I can't hear as much as a breath if they were talkin' thundher."

He did so.

" The best of us, and those that go laste in the way of temptation," continued the old soldier, " have something to repent of, and what could be expected from a man of my kind, that spent all his life in bloodshed?—All, beginning airly."

Phil, hearing the word *bloodshed*, as I suppose, and imagining that the speakers in the vault were some of the insurgents, his

neighbours, was unwilling that I should gather any information, by which their safety might be endangered. Accordingly he gave a slight cough, just sufficiently loud to be heard by those inside. I saw them start, and hurried off along the church yard path, in order to avoid the mortification of being detected in the act of eve's dropping. I found a horse, which I took to be that of the stranger, fastened on the road side, at a little distance from our own, with holsters and rich furniture. I mounted my own animal, and rode home, where I found my poor Mary, (unlike the naughty lady of Breifni, who had not even a rush lighting in the house on her husband's return), watching anxiously by our parlour fire, and chiding the rough necessities of the time which called up peaceful men from their domestic hearths to scenes of bustling danger and despatch.

My house was safe enough, for I found my garrison of Police in the kitchen, keeping

up their courage with rashers of bacon and draughts of cider of my best manufacture. I said nothing to any one of my adventure at the Abbey, but secretly resolved to learn something more, if possible, of the persons who had excited my curiosity so strongly. And in the mean time, I applied myself to the furthering of my interests in the manner which Dalton recommended.

CHAPTER IX.

MY "Peelers," indeed, were "huge feeders," and as I passed, day after day, through my capacious kitchen, and cast an eye toward the bacon hooks, where I beheld the flitches vanishing one after another, I felt a sensation very like anxiety begin to stir within my heart. A complete revolution had taken place in the politics and economy of Cushlane-Beg. My train of hereditary dependents disappeared at sight of the

Police, as fairies use to do at sight of a priest, and began to look on their old master as an altered man. My tenants became more reserved and more respectful; and when I walked into the fields, to superintend my workmen, I perceived that the conversation was hushed, or the subject changed on my approach, and that every word spoken in my presence was well weighed and guarded with a suspicious deliberation. My attempts at cordial jocularity and good humour were not received as of yore; and the more familiar and condescending I became, the more distant and distrustful did the men appear. When I spoke in anger, I was not met, as formerly, with bold and open remonstrance and warm self-justification. They heard me now in silence, with dark and solemn countenances, and without any symptom either of dissent or acquiescence.

In my own immediate family, likewise, my new course of life had produced an influence

that was not calculated to encrease our happiness. The female part of the household, who did not enter into Dalton's ideas of papistical extermination so readily as I had done, were hurt at the extreme rigour with which I exerted myself to second his views. My uneasiness, moreover, occasioned by my expenses, and by Dalton's delaying to refund the large sum I had lent him, rendered me less cheerful and good humoured than usual. A gradual degree of embarrassed reserve diffused itself over the family circle. Neither my wife, nor daughter, ventured a remonstrance on any occasion, and this circumstance joined to the consciousness that they disapproved my conduct, rendered me doubly impatient and ill-humoured.

A poor man, who owed me some arrears of rent, applied to Mary to procure him some farther time, as the whole support of his family, during the ensuing spring, depended on the stock of potatoes which I had seized for the money

due. I wanted the sum, and refused, for the first time in my life, to admit her intercession. The next day, I went to superintend the *cant*, or auction of the potatoes, in person.

"Folly * on, Misther Thracy! folly on!" I heard the owner, (a white-headed, calm-eyed, patient old man) say, as I approached. "The days are altered with us, Masther. I'm ould enough to remember a gentleman, a rale gentleman, that kep house in Cushlane-Beg, an' that would n't see my little piatez canted on me this mornin'; an' that gentleman was your own father. But folly on! An' I second cousin to your own fostherer, too! But what hurt? Folly on. We had nothing to look to, the four of us, but that little pit o' piatez, till the new ones come in, while you an' the Peelers can have what ye like best, at the great house. I seen the day, masther, when the doores o' that house were open to the poor man, an' the smoke o'

* Follow.

the chimney was a pleasant token to the thraveller goin' the road, an' the night comin' on, an' he hungry, an' the inns dear, an' his pocket empty; but the times are changed; folly on! Ah, sir, there's One above that's lookin' down on you an' me this day, an' that sees how hard you're dhrivin' on the poor man. You have children, Masther, as well as I have; take care would the time come when ——— but indeed, I won't say that, for I'd be sorry it should, for their own sakes. You put your trust in Dalton, an' forsake your people. Take care, I advise you. Dalton proved a deçaiver to others, an' he may to you. Folly on, sir, folly on! The time was, formerly, when the gentlemen used to open their doores to take the poor into their kitchens an' cherish 'em: but now in place o' takin' 'em in, they go to find the poor man in his own cabin to take the food from betwixt his lips. There's my piatez, the price of my hard labour, take 'em with you, sure 'tis you has the best call to 'em."

He turned away with a flushed cheek, and the smile of one who, feeling himself hardly used, would not stoop to any violent expression either of distress or indignation. Fortifying my resolution by recollecting the commonness of the occurrence, I affected an indifference which I was very far from feeling, and made some customary answer about the length of time already given, my own calls, and the impossibility of paying rent without receiving the value of my land—(to each of which he replied by a smile and toss of his head). The sale proceeded, and I put the money in my pocket.

Some further instances of a similar rigour completely unfixed the slight hold which I yet retained on the affections of my tenants. Their mild and benevolent protectress, in my own family, had lost her influence, and as she seemed as affectionate as ever, and always admitted the justice of my reasons, I took it for granted, that she felt nothing more than she expressed

on the subject. They were, however, the first favours I had ever refused her, and as she perceived how painful to me, as well as to herself, was the continued failure in her applications, she soon discontinued them altogether, and found her resource in patience and the care of her children.

I was walking down our avenue, a few mornings after these circumstances abovementioned, when I met Dalton and his son, followed by a number of Police, riding towards me. Young Henry had his arm bound in a sling, and whether from that, or, from some other cause looked, as I thought, a little pale and anxious. I observed him make an effort to remove his arm from the sling as I approached, but his father, with an angry look, prevented him.

"Psha!" I heard Henry say, as I came up, "it appears so effeminate to go about bandaged in this manner, on account of a little scratch."

"No accident, I hope, Mr Dalton?" I said, as we met.

"Look at him, Tracy!" cried his father, his eyes sparkling at the same time with affection, fatherly pride, anxiety and grief. "Did you ever see such an atrocious young scoundrel? This is the second duel he has fought within the last fortnight, and shed blood on both occcasions."

"A duel, Henry!"

"They went out last night after dusk, and fired two cases of pistols in the dark. And not content with that, sir, this young villain insists upon adjourning it to this morning — "

"Upon my word, sir— "

"Hold your tongue, sir, I say! This young desperado insists upon going out again this morning—— "

"But, sir, upon my word you mistake. That was Mr. Purtill's own arrangement. He acknowledged it himself upon the ground, and

I could not in honour have avoided it, for it was I, you know, who received the challenge."

"Aye, you be d——, you and your honour, to go out and shoot an honest man through the leg in a morning, and get your arm well nigh shot away, and then come here prating of your honour, you atrocious monster!"

And at the same time you might see the father's eyes sparkling with delight.

"And Mr. Purtill is wounded then?" said I.

"Severely—severely wounded, sir," the father continued—"the young scoundrel shot him through the leg. The young villian! He has no more feeling than a stone. Not a single tremor, no remorse. The fellow always brings down his man. He shot O'Sullivan at the first fire."

I invited both the gentlemen into my house, but was only successful with the son. Dalton, informed me that he was about to search some houses in the neighbourhood, and hinted at the

probability, that, before evening, he should be able to rid me for ever of all my apprehensions with regard to the surviving Shanahan and his oath of vengeance.

I could not avoid smiling to see that Dalton acted and spoke as if I were the sole or principal object of Shanahan's resentment, when I knew that in point of fact he was himself many degrees more obnoxious to that person and his friends.

He rode away with his Police, and I returned with Henry to the house. The latter took an opportunity, when unobserved, to slip the sling from off his neck, and put it into his pocket.

"Is your arm so strong," said I, "that you can venture to take such a liberty as that?"

"My hurt is nothing," he replied, "and it looks like a piece of nonsensical foppery to go in to the ladies with a disabled limb, as if I were after doing some great things."

It was a little touch of manliness of this nature in his character that made me like Henry, as I did, through all the changes of our family. I left him alone with the ladies, who seemed both delighted to see him, and went out upon my grounds to do some necessary business.

I was standing, about noon, in a part of my farm, where I had men laying out sea-weed, when the sound of an affray, intermingled with the shrill and re-iterated screams of a female, broke on the mid-day stillness. Accustomed as I had now become to harden my heart against the pleadings of distress, I paid but a momentary attention to this occurrence. I rebuked the men for their looks of pity and curiosity, and bade them continue their labour. The anxieties, the remorses, the resentments, the ambitious restlessness, and dreams of self-aggrandizement which had preyed upon my heart in turn, throughout the two preceding months, had altered my nature, and called out

a sternness and violence of character, which I knew not that I possessed.

Suddenly a poor countrywoman appeared in the neighbouring gap, and perceiving me in the field, hurried across the ridges of stubble with a speed that indicated deep alarm. She threw herself on her knees before me, and remained for a few moments endeavouring to recover breath to speak.

"Oh, masther, speak for him! Forget, forgive all, and speak for him!"

"Mary Shanahan!"

"My husband, sir! The father of my childer that they're takin' from me, this way. Come, and good luck to you, and spake a word for him to the Peelers. Dalton has laid his hand upon him, and the man that Dalton takes from his family never again darkens his own threshold. Oh, masther, have mercy upon us all! They say you're changed to the poor, and tha we can't look for the same pity now as

before, but I would'nt b'lieve the world, that you'd lave us in this sthraight. Come and make 'em *lay* * the father to his poor children, an I'll go down on my two knees to heaven every day I live to pray that you may be left long over your own!"

The agony of her tones pierced my heart. "For what has he been arrested?" I asked. "Mr. Dalton does not often do these things without reason."

"For conçailed arms. An' sure the Lord of all, that's looking down on us this day, knows that the child unborn knew more of 'em than we did. Without raison? — Oh, Mr. Thracy, you ought to know that Jem and I always drew a line between ourselves an' them people."

A murmur of assent and pity passed among the workmen.

* Leave.

"Concealed arms!" I repeated: a doubtful and misty recollection of a former incident arising on my mind, and making my heart thrill with terror, at the insight it seemed to afford into Dalton's real character. I paused and strove to call the circumstance perfectly to mind before I asked, "where the arms had been found?"

"In under the *tatch*. Just where you were lying yourself the night Dan Moran was shot on the sheep-walk."

The sudden suspicion, the alarm, were dreadful. I started in real fear, and bidding the woman hurry after me, I ran across the wheat-garden towards Shanahan's house, while she, following, loaded me with blessings.

When I arrived, I found that they had been expecting me. Dalton professing his unwillingness to take a tenant off my land without making me aware of the charge against him. He and Skerrit were conversing together on

the road before the humble tenement of their victim. The latter, with an air of mingled grief, dejection, and indignation, on his gloomy countenance, leaned against the threshold in silence, and stared hardly upon Dalton. A party of the all-formidable Police stood near him, laughing, and enjoying, amid this scene of distress, the delicious consciousness of power. A girl about nine years of age stood crying near her father, and a fine boy apparently about four years younger stood in the door way eating a roasted potatoe and gazing around him with a face of innocent wonder and unconsciousness, which was still more touching than the tears and moanings of his sister. At some distance from the scene, a number of men, women, and children, inhabitants of the adjoining hamlet, stood looking on, huddled together like a flock of terrified sheep. Even the domestic animals seemed to retain some memory of the scenes of strife which usually

followed the appearance of those awful protectors of the peace. The pigs kept within their styes as if aware of the Insurrection Act, and the dogs slunk away, growling seditiously, with their tails between their legs.

Dalton, to gratify a petty malice against this poor man, (the cause of which I had learned from his conversation with the woman already related,) had secreted those arms in the place where they were found, and now was about to found a charge of treason against the innocent man, on this diabolical contrivance. * This was my first thought, but I compelled myself to reject it, as I looked upon the scene. It was too black, too demoniacal a pro-

* Notwithsanding my respect for Mr. Tracy's veracity, I felt it my duty, ere I suffered this transaction to appear before the public, to ascertain whether it were without precedent but my inquiries determined me not to alter the manuscript. I nave been assured that expedients as frightfully devoid of principle at that abovementioned were put in operation in some instances in the South of Ireland.

ceeding. I suspended my judgment altogether, until I should have heard the particulars of the case.

"Where did you find the arms?" said I to Dalton.

He took me into the house and pointed out the very spot into which I had seen him thrust his hand on the night of my wound!

All was now out. My doubts were ended. Dalton was a fiend, and I was his dupe. I felt a warm perspiration creeping over my frame, when the discovery broke upon my understanding, and all its fearful consequences to my own welfare rushed with a swift and lucid violence upon my heart. My first feeling was that of burning, and almost incontrollable, indignation. Had it been the first time of our meeting, sinner that I was, I would have taken the ruffian by the throat, and shaken the demon spirit out of him.

May Heaven forgive me for this guilty language! It is a long time before the embers of passions dark and long indulged can be extinguished.

But a cautious, selfish thought sprung up in time sufficient to arrest the open burst of rage. Though Dalton was a villain, I was in his power. He owed me a large sum of money, for which I had but a slight acknowledgment, and he was on the point of procuring for me a lucrative situation. Besides, (this saving possibility suggested itself after my prudential considerations,) besides, it was possible that Dalton might be the victim of appearances, strong indeed, but yet not absolute and demonstrative.

Still my nature remained violently aroused and excited. My feelings must have been vividly depicted on my features, for Dalton, on turning round, after pointing out the recess in which he had found the arms, and looking on my face, started, like a detected thief.

"Dalton," said I, "I have the best reason in the world to suppose that this unfortunate man is innocent of any ill intent whatsoever. I am certain he knew nothing of that weapon."

Dalton, taken by surprise, turned pale as a corpse. "If you have good reason to believe that," said he, "it would alter the case."

"I have," I continued, endeavouring to repress the disgust and anger which I felt, and which made my voice tremble. "I have good reason to think that they were secreted in that place, by some enemy of the poor man, for the purpose of ruining him. I am sure of it," I added, fixing my eye upon him, and closing my lips hard. "There are men in this world, Dalton, passionless, heartless, lawless, selfish and cold-blooded men, who have so little feeling of the pains or pleasures of their fellow creatures; whose ears are so dull to the cry of anguish and of entreaty; whose eyes are so dim to the sights

of sorrow and affliction that pass before them; whose breasts are so hard to the instincts of generosity and compassion; that, to save a single hair of their own heads, they would suffer all the interests of humanity to sink in one general ruin. I am almost disgusted with my office. Most miserable land! Despoiled, degraded, wretched, unhappy people! Which of your enemies need wish for the possession of absolute power in order to crush and torture you, when all the purposes of tyranny can be effected so secretly and so securely?"

"I can understand the meaning, but not the occasion, of your words," said Dalton, who had now perfectly recovered his impenetrability of aspect. "This is new language from you, Tracy. Are you thinking of becoming a patriot?"

"I am calculating within my own mind the number of persons whom I have dragged from their families on circumstances no more

suspicious than this, and who may have been as innocent as this poor Shanahan. I hear at this moment, the voices of our victims vibrating through the swell of the Atlantic, and asking me, what share had Justice in the motives which led me to destroy their hopes and prospects, and the light comfort of their families for ever? We were poor, they say, but we had our affections as strong and deeply seated as the wealthy, and you have snatched away from us the consolations of our poverty. We were innocent of the crimes for which we suffer a privation of the few earthly enjoyments the Almighty left us; but believing us guilty, you are only answerable for our wrongs, so far as you acted on selfish and interested motives. For these, it will one day be your fate to tremble, where we shall smile."

"You are too scrupulous a politician," said Dalton, with a horrid laugh; "it is easy to satisfy your doubts on that head. Be assured that

all of that rank at present in the South of Ireland are equally guilty, and if your prisoner happened to be innocent of the charge on which you arrested him, he was yet conscious of some similar and equally grievous transgression."

"I know," said I, "that such has been the horrid principle on which our Juries often bring in their verdicts of extirpation, but woe on their hard hearts and unreasoning heads! that will not justify, to Heaven, the direct perjury and injustice which they commit. The exigencies of the time, they say, call for a less scrupulous observance of facts, where the object is to lessen the number of *possible* offenders. But conscience and nature cry, No! The makers, and not the executors, of the law must decide how far its rigid dicta may be violated, and they have yet given no discretionary power to our Juries, to condemn for a suspected and unalledged offence, while they acquit on that which is declared. The law may

decimate, but not the petit juror. I have furnished victims to a self-constituted inquisition!"

"Well, well! You can enjoy your opinion. Mine is for decimation, and I avow it. I am a loyal man, and my principle is to uphold the ruling power, at whatever expense. When peace returns, let mercy and humanity return with her, and they shall be welcome, but until then, the best mercy of a good subject should be severity."

"When you and I, Dalton, are lying on our death beds, I hope the remembrance of our loyalty will shed as sweet and quieting an influence upon our souls, as others feel at the recollection of mercy indulged, of human suffering alleviated, of days spent in relieving the wants and drying the tears of orphanage and widowhood, and of nights consumed in allaying the pains and dissipating the anxieties of sickness. But I see you are impatient."

I rose, and taking a wooden cup which lay

on the painted table near me, helped myself from a can of spring water. While I drank, the fever and tumult of my thoughts subsided, and the realities of my situation came back with a greater clearness upon my mind.

Yes, I thought, I will first withdraw myself from his power, and secure a compensation for my losses, and then I will denounce and cast him off. Until then, until I am secure from the effects of his resentment, beware, my temper, how you suffer your vulgar prejudices to appear!

I listened, meanwhile, to a long dissertation of Dalton's, on the state of the Island, on the weakness of my nature, on the gain to be acquired by activity and *firmness*, and other stimulating subjects. But his pains were superfluous, for I had already determined to sacrifice my consciousness of right, and enter into a compromise with treachery.

"Let our conversation for the present end

with this, Dalton," I said, rising, and laying aside the hay-bottomed chair, "liberate Shanahan, at once. I am answerable for his loyalty."

"It is more than enough," said Dalton, with assumed frankness and pleasure. "I shall not ask another question about the case."

We went out, and the magistrate ordered the prisoner to be set at liberty, saying that Mr. Tracy had satisfied him of Shanahan's innocence. As he turned to depart, I perceived him look on me with one of those smiles which were the usual indications of wrath and forerunners of ruin to the person on whom they fell. I understood not their meaning then, however, and troubled not my mind about it.

I was now overwhelmed with a tumult of gratulation and applause from the friends of the rescued prisoner. The people crowded round me with demonstrations of old esteem and affection revived in an instant. I was their own mas-

ter once again. I had a heart after all. They knew all along it was that thief Dalton was leading me astray. Was there any thing now in the wide world, they could do for me? Let me only speak my mind.

The poor woman, who saw herself thus suddenly and unexpectedly restored to the enjoyment of her domestic happiness, was still more passionate in the expression of her gratitude. She embraced her husband and her children, clasped her hands, and wrung them hard, while she looked up to heaven, and then turning to me, with tears in her eyes, "May the Lord fasten the life in you!" said she, "and may this deed stand before you at the gate of heaven on another day! you were *a great mains** of bringing comfort to our house again, this mornin'." Here she raised herarms as if impelled to throw them round me, but with

* This pious distinction, between the first cause and his mortal instrument, is carefully observed by the peasantry.

a rapid and modest self-recollection, she sunk to the earth and suffered them to fall round my feet. The husband, perhaps, unwilling to add to the embarrassment which I felt, contented himself with drawing his children to his side, and laying his rough hand over the silky ringlets of the youngest boy, who continued to eat his way through the roast potatoe with an air of philosophic satisfaction and equability.

As I turned away to depart, a *hack* carriage, (a vehicle equivalent to the London Glass Coach, but having the owner's name and residence painted on the doors, and a simple cross-stick with a handful of straw substituted for a coach-box) drove rapidly by the hamlet. A yellow, languid face looked out upon me through the window, and was drawn back in an instant. The single encounter of our eyes, however, had startled me with a sudden and unaccountable feeling

of recognition, and the action of the stranger would have led me to suspect that this sensation was mutual at the moment. I felt, also, an emotion of deep shame and humiliation, which was still more mysterious than our apparently reciprocal mistake of identity. The latter indeed is a frequent occurrence in society. But it was its strong and singular effect upon my own mind that prevented my dismissing the circumstance altogether from my memory.

Rising early the next morning, and walking out to visit the few cultivated portions of my farm, I found that a change had taken place, in the night, which deserved to be celebrated by the flowery and fanciful pen of the renowned Johnson * himself. The

* Not, I apprehend, the fat and famous moralist and biographer of that name, but a man whose biography is in much greater request among the school-boy readers of the day.—Richard Johnson, author of that admirable piece of history entitled The Seven Champions of Christendom.

whole face of the farm had been altered.—My potatoes were trenched, as if by magic; my turf was moulded and cut and footed, my broken down hedges or *ditches* were repaired, and all done that could be done to repair the evil which neglect and malice had occasioned. On one of the large elms—

> Whose boughs were mossed with age,
> And high top bald with dry antiquity,

the hand of the midnight enchanter had affixed the following notice, by the unworthy instrumentality of a round stone and a few pavers or hob nails. "This is from them that knows how to reward good behavor as well as to make tyrants feel the smart. You will hear more as you desarve from Lieutenant Skin'em Alive. United office."

CHAPTER X.

STILL my Peelers ate on, my bacon vanished, my potatoe-pits were emptied, my tenants were estranged, my life threatened, Dalton's debt unpaid, my peace lost, my temper broken, my heart consumed with fear and vain expectation.

I was doubly unhappy in the indulgence of my premature calculations, as I had been vain enough to assume, in advance, all the

importance, to which the accomplishment of my wishes might have entitled me. The consequence was that my neighbours of my own rank were deeply offended by my arrogance. I knew enough of human nature to be aware that on the first rumour of a disappointment this folly would be well avenged. I had, therefore, the apprehension of approaching ruin to terrify me, without the allaying consciousness that my fall would be attended with the pity of those who knew me in better days.

Late voyagers inform us that the dreaded regions of the North, which give birth to those black tempests that fill the rest of the world with confusion, are themselves wrapt in an everlasting stillness and repose. There are human tempers in which this natural phenomenon might find its own analogy. The, "sadness of the countenance" by which the heart of the offender is reproved, and all

the demonstrations of that unsinning anger which virtue itself must often use for the preservation of its peace, may be found, in such an one, to originate in a heart that, even amid those indications of displeasure, is still calm, quiet and confiding.

Such was the unreal anger which my repeated unkindness at length drew forth from my unhappy and enduring Mary. I had refused her some moderate request to allow some poor protegé to fill a *cleave*, [basket,] of turf from our rick.—She remonstrated gently on the whole train of conduct which I had pursued since my accquaintance with Dalton commenced. I spoke passionately and roughly. Satisfied with having done what she considered her duty, she was silent.

In a few days after, rather with the view of showing me that she retained no ill feeling than with any anxiety to obtain what she asked, she made me a new and some-

what similar request. This I also refused, and with unnecessary rudeness. But her affection and her strong sense stood the trial, and she was still as cheerful and even minded as before. Those who know how much one single act of intentional rudeness, one slight hurt in the affection, can do to shake the happiness of a domestic circle, will perhaps be astonished at her forbearance. But hers was something higher, better, and more disinterested than an unregulated natural affection. I thought, because she expressed nothing, that she did not feel her loss of influence; but I was soon undeceived.

We were sitting together about noon, after having spent the morning in unsocial, and, on my part, churlish silence. Happening to lift my eyes suddenly to her's, I found they had been fixed on me for some time with an eager and deeply expressive meaning. It was one of those looks in which whole volumes of language

are comprised. Regret, tenderness, pity, gentle upbraiding, and the heart-suffering of kindnesses unappreciated and affection unreturned, were as clearly visible in the single glance as whole hours of complaint and reproaches could have made them. It pierced at once to my heart, and filled me with shame and remorse. Our early happiness—her sacrifice of rank and wealth—her unrepining love—her care—her tenderness, were all present in a moment to my imagination. I saw all she felt, and all my own ingratitude as in a mirror. My first impulse (old as I was) would have led me to throw myself at her feet—but I feared it, and left the room.

I walked for a short time along the flagged hall, clenching my hand hard, and pressing it against my forehead in a strong feeling of pain and self-reproach, while I muttered repeatedly, — "the gentle—gentle creature! — What an unmannered ruffian I have been!"

Anxious to lose no time in making reparation,

I re-entered the apartment, at the window of which she still maintained her musing position. I walked up and down the room, endeavouring to find some mode of breaking the subject.

"Mary," I said at length, "you must have observed a great change in me of late."

The unusual tone of voice in which I spoke startled and made her look on me for a moment with an expression of enquiry and surprise. She even blushed, as if fearful that she had suffered her feeling of that change to become too apparent.

"Why should you think so, Abel?" said she, "what change do you speak of?"

"Ah, you must have felt that I did not treat you as you deserve. I am sensible myself that my society must have been any thing but a pleasure to you; but if you knew my distractions and my anxieties, I am sure you would pity me."

"I have considered them, and do pity you,"

she said, passionately, reaching me her hand, which I grasped and shook with warmth, while the tears streamed from her eyes. "I only wish that you could be made to pity yourself. But what peace can remain with us while you continue to expose yourself to so many dangers by provoking the anger of these people, or what wealth or distinction can repay us for anxieties like these?"

"Come," said I, "my dear monitor, the evening is beautiful. We will walk over as far as our friend Clancy's, and talk of our affairs and prospects by the way."

She rose, with a gaiety of spirits which she had not displayed for a long time, and made herself ready for the promenade. As we were walking down the lawn, we heard Willy's voice calling after me. Looking round, we beheld him galloping over the grass with a pair of pistols in his hands.

"Won't you take your pistols, sir? you left them after you on the sate in the hall."

"*Seat*, I have often told you, Willy, was the word."

"*Seet*, sir. Won't you take 'em?"

"No. There is no occasion. Take them in and don't meddle with them. If Phil Fogarty were here, he would tell you that it was unlucky to call after a person who is setting out on a journey."

"Better take 'em so, sir."

"No, my lad. I'm not superstitious—and if any ill luck should happen, you may be assured that your calling after us shall be no part of its cause."

He ran home, and we continued our journey. A few minutes, spent in frank and mutual interchange of confidence, completely restored our minds to that calm understanding, that perfect communion of interests and feelings in which the happiness of married life alone con-

sists. Mary had, early on this morning, (while I was still repairing the exhaustion of the previous night patrol) complied with the ancient duties of her religion, and the peace and serenity which the holy rite inspired were so visible, as almost to supply the place of the vanished bloom and freshness of her youth. I disclosed to her all my plans, prospects, and anxieties, and felt her advice and consolations falling on the fevered and restless pulses of my heart, with a healing and allaying influence. Difficulties which I had considered insurmountable were made plain and easy, Hope made to spring and flourish where Despair seemed to have established her empire; and perplexities at once unravelled by the first slight efforts of an upright and disembarrassed mind, which I thought it would be impossible ever to disentangle.

"Well! it is now at an end, and I hope for ever," said Mary; "but I will confess to you that I have had, during the last few months,

moments of dreadful apprehension. I had heard much of the misery of old age, in the married life of those who entered on that season without the necessary concordance of mind and temper, and my heart sunk within me, when in faithless and selfish moments, I thought it just possible that such a lot might be our own. They were but the doubts of a moment, for I knew you too well to think that any harshness, the effect of passing circumstances, could become habitual. But all is now past, and my breast feels as light as if a dreary and stifling nightmare had suddenly left it. I am now happy. My fears, my griefs have fled, more swiftly than the wind, before the few kind words you have spoken. My heart is free, my mind is at ease. I am now happy. The dream of the young wife may now be realized—a cheerful house—affectionate and grateful children, the unfading and minute attention of the same heart that ministered to my own the happiness of its youth; all may

now be accomplished—I have every thing to hope—and nothing to regret.——Abel," she continued, after a sudden pause "I have one request to make, that I have been longing to mention to you for some time. Something tells me that you will see my brother Ulick before long. I have left a small parcel directed for an old friend, in a drawer of the low-boy. If I should die before you, remember to deliver it safe on the first opportunity you may obtain."

I promised, and we continued our walk in silence.

We had now entered a narrow path, leading through a low, level field, which was covered with a species of tall reed, reaching high above our heads. We stood a moment on the earthen stile leading into this plain, to observe the effect of the declining sunlight on the undulating surface of the reed.

On a sudden, my eye was attracted by a singular motion in the tops of the reeds, as if

several living animals were traversing the field among their stems in the direction of our path. While I fixed my eyes on this circumstance, a loud scream broke from my wife and an exclamation of ———

"Fly! Abel! Abel! fly! or we are murdered!"

"Stand! Hold fast! Halt!" was pronounced by several voices as a number of men dressed in coats of mud coloured frieze, and variously armed, started up from the screen of the close reeds, and stood like sudden spectres upon our path.

"I am lost." I muttered. "Mary, keep close to me, my love." I gathered her, half-fainting, to my arms. "Well, friends," I asked with an ill-feigned composure, "what is your will with us?"

"Put the lady from you," said the foremost, "and go down upon your knees."

"Mary," said I, "they do not want to

hurt you. Leave me, my own saint, leave me to appease them; go aside, and pray for me. I know they will not injure you."

"You're betther hear to what he says Ma'am," said one of the ruffians, "we wish you no evil. Go o' one side, and pray for him, as he bids you, for your prayer is worth more than his, either to man or heaven."

"Go," I repeated, pressing her hand and kissing it; "think of our children and leave me. Kiss them all for me—Go. My poor daughter! Oh, you will curse me, if you know the form, when you learn all. But leave me. It is my only chance."

"I will never stir from this spot without you," she replied with firmness, "and if they are murderers, they may wreak their hate on both."

One of the men stepped forward, as if for the purpose of forcing her away.

"Stand back!" I exclaimed, with a stern-

ness which made him start and grasp a rusty bayonet, that was stuck into a hay rope which bound his waist. "Stand back, if you are a man, lay not your hand upon her!" My voice grew fainter and my knees weak and trembling. "She is your friend, your constant, unchanging friend. Her voice was always uplifted for you; you are base ingrates, if you touch her; base, thankless, worthless, ingrates," I continued, the sudden and tumultuous vaccilation of my spirits hurrying me into a degree of passionate invective beyond what the occasion required. "If you lay a finger on her, you are dogs, tigers, hounds of Satan, ruffians without the capability either of revenge or of gratitude, undistinguishing cut-throats, motiveless, blood-thirsty slaves, and no Irishmen."

"Poh, what rhamaush it is!" exclaimed the foremost, "sure we toult you we mane her no hurt. Stand o' one side ma'am, a' you plase."

"I mistook you, then," said I, gently, again, relapsing into weakness, while my eyes were almost blinded by the perspiration that flowed into and about them. "If your intentions are good, let us go our way in peace, and peace and comfort lie on yours. Good night, good fellows. If I have wronged you by any unjust suspicion, I am sorry for it, very sorry, and will be ready to make you better amends when I see you at Cushlane-Beg."

"An' that's just the very place where you never 'll see us nor any body else in this world any more," said the former speaker. "Better amends! The stone jug, may be, or a walk up Ladder-lane, or a hempen cravat. Or a seven year's voyage out over the salt ocean. Good fellows! says he. Oh, you double-tongued and shameless deçaver! I know the name that you have for us in your heart, the name that Dalton taught you, an' that you larned from him ready enough. Pace be on

our ways! That's the wish you wished us? Neither pace, nor plenty, nor quietness, nor comfort, was in our ways or houses, since you an' the likes of you came amongst us. Come! ma'am, let go your hoult!" he added in a tremendous voice.

"What then do you intend for me?" I asked in strong fear.

"The same fate," said he, with eyes inflamed with heat, and brows knit hard above them, "the fate that poor young Shanahan met from you."

"I never harmed a hair of Shanahan's head. Do you take me thus suddenly for a crime which I never shared in?"

"You shall have the time," he said, sternly, "which you gave Shanahan."

Here a tall, huge-limbed, and flat-nosed man, armed with a heavy oak stick, and with his face and hair bathed in perspiration, sprung from the reeds, and swearing an oath at the

last speaker, rushed fiercely on us. Using a strong effort, I put Mary aside, and confronted the ruffian's blow, which was broken upon my arm. Mary, in the next instant, sprung to his neck, and exerted all her feeble strength to drag him back. I saw the former speaker uplift his rusty bayonet, and was about to plunge forward and arrest its descent, when a hard and ringing blow upon my own head seemed to have set my brain on fire. My eyes flashed, my ears jingled, the whole scene vanished from my sight, and my senses became inert and lifeless.

I woke, as from a dreamless slumber, when the sun had just gone down, with a sense of stiffness and pain, which were almost insupportable. I lay among the tall reeds, on my back, and heard the lowing of some cattle, who, attracted by the scent of blood, came snuffing inquisitively about the scene of violence. It was not without an effort that I called to

mind the occasion of the position in which I lay.

"They have murdered her," was my first surmise —— "or I should not have lain here until now."

The sound of several voices (among which I recognized those of Mc'Gawyl, the impetuous landlord of A——, of Doody, Clancy, and Dalton,) soon after broke upon my ear. I closed my eyes and lay still, expecting to learn the issue of our misfortune from their conversation.

"Where can they have conveyed him?" asked one, "can he have been *spirited away?*"

"Flung among the reeds somewhere, I'll go bail," replied Mc Gawyl.——"'Tis only in harvest, when the corn and the hay will be cutting, that we'll find out how many people are murther'd, these times."

"Where did you leave her?" asked Dalton, "did you carry her to their own house?"

Her.—Who ?—I listened with a beating heart.

"We wor goin' there with her, sir," was the reply, but we met young Mr. Clancy, over near the church in the fields.—"

"That church!" I echoed to myself; "the curse is coming down."

"And he bid us take her over to old Moran's 'till he'd go and prepare the family about it. But there's neither tale nor tidings of the masther yet."

I held my breath to hear more, but it was not spoken. "She lives," I thought, "she has then escaped!"

"It was shocking! It was a dreadful murder!" said my poor, good friend, Clancy.

"And of a woman, too! so unmanly!" said another of the party.

I sunk back and groaned aloud.—In a moment after I was discovered, and conveyed amid many vain demonstrations of condolence,

to the house were the corpse of my wife was laid.

My heart beat with a fierce and vengeful delight when Dalton informed me that he had a man in custody for the deed.

"Let me see him! I shall know him among ten thousand!" I exclaimed, raising my person up from the bed with a strength which was before unknown to me.

They brought him in, and my breast sickened with disappointment. It was Moran, the poor man, whose potatoes I had sold a short time before under such circumstances of hardship. Innocent as he was, the suspicious nature of the circumstances against him and the mode of administering justice which was usual at the time, oppressed the poor old man with a thousand fears. Any common observer would, from his manner, alone, have pronounced him guilty.

"Take him away!" said I, "my heart

is burthened at the sight of him. He is innocent. Old man, forgive me, from your heart, the wrong that I did you. I will repair it if I live."

The virtuous and honest creature flung himself on his knees at the bed-side, and loaded me with blessings.

"What wrong could I charge again' your honour," said he, "if I was'nt light at the time? Was'nt it all your own, an' sure now I see that it was'nt without wanting it you took 'em from me. But a hungry man will say a dale that he does'nt mane."

I did not yet see my dead wife. But late at night, when the house was quiet, and I heard only the breathing of the visitors who slept on the sugan chairs around the spacious fire place and the occasional fall and crackling of the embers, I rose, wrapped the blue woollen quilt about my shoulders, and taking the small candle in my hand, went softly into

the room where they had laid her. I closed the door, and walked towards the bedside. It was hung with white, and decorated with wreaths of primrose and damask roses. Two large mould candles burned at the foot of the bed, and as many on each side. The poor old woman, who had undertaken to watch by the corpse, overpowered with fatigue, had fallen asleep on her knees near a window, while her large horn rosary hung over the back of a chair.

All the signs of violence had been removed from the face of the corpse. I went on, perusing the details of the scene, my breast filled almost to bursting with a thousand strange and undistinguishable sensations, among which remorse, doubt and wonder were the principal. The face was calm, white, and even, I thought, half smiling. Encouraged by the sweetness of its expression, which made the blankness of death less terrible, I stooped over it to bestow

a parting kiss on the forehead. But as I held the candle forward, the expression altered. The lips, I now saw, were chipped and dragged downward at the corners with a hideous look of pain and scorn. I started from the frightful rebuke of the dead, and hurried out of the chamber like one who fears some supernatural encounter.

CHAPTER XI.

Months rolled away. My health was quite restored. Rowan Clancy had again become a constant visitor of Ellen's, and pressed me to name the day of their union. I could not do so, for Dalton had not yet replaced the dowry of my child within my hands. I bore with him, for there was a situation of high emolument and influence about to become vacant in our county, and Dalton promised me his interest in

the procuring of it. His interest was believed to be "all in all sufficient," and I did not wish to endanger my prospects for a comparative trifle.

I was seated one morning in my room, and looking out with a gaze of mournful recollection upon that field on which my first encounter with the peasantry had taken place. The consequences of that unhappy night all hurried through my memory, and the scene acquired a deep and affecting interest. It was now gay with sunshine, and fresh with the verdure of the season. The lark soared and sang, the winds blew soft, the clouds moved slowly overhead, the whole face of Nature was animated by an easy and cheerful life, that stirred in every feature

In this situation I was surprized by a visit from old Clancy, who entered, holding an open newspaper in his hand.

"Well, what think you, now," said he, "of

this post that Dalton has promised to procure you?"

My ambition was all alive and active in an instant.

"I think," said I, "there is some recompense due to me, now: I have made some sacrifices for the state." And I smiled ghastlily.

Clancy took a chair, drew out his pocket handkerchief, and blew his nose with a deliberation which foreboded some important communication.

"The holder of it, an old man, was murdered a fortnight since," said he "has any body told you?"

"Not one. More helpless blood! What a base and cowardly crew, my friend, are those who undertake to redress the oppressions of the people! Who are the tyrants that they destroy? the oppressors they remove? the old, the gentle, the timid, the infirm. The Daltons and Skerrits, the daring and fearless scourges

of the people may ride in safety through the land, but their helpless grandsires, or unoffending wives——forgive me, my friend, I am troublesome to you."

"Did not Dalton make you aware of it?"

"I take it much unkindly that Dalton has never once visited me since the beginning of the month."

"Well, of all men in the world," said Clancy, or of all things in the world; and sure 'tis full of queer men and queer things enough; but I say of all men, or all things in this world the last thing that I'd suspect is that Dalton could ever think of doing any thing unhandsome by you."

"Poh, neither do I. I suppose he was advancing my interest in other quarters, but he might have found a moment to see me. Ah, my dear friend Clancy, between you and me, that man has brought many a heavy hour upon my heart. He meant all well, I know, and

therefore it is not easy for me to entertain ill feeling against him, but oh, I have suffered deeply, deeply to his acquaintance! Ah, Clancy, he never can make amends for what has been done. He will put me in possession of wealth and influence, but what is that? It will indeed enable me to make my children happy, to enlarge my poor daughter's dowry, and relieve your noble Rowan of some embarrassments that might otherwise encumber him. But for myself there is little positive enjoyment remaining in the world."

Clancy remained for a moment leaning forward in his chair and gently striking with the end of his cane a *creeraun* [small piece] of turf which lay on the floor.

"Are you sure," said he, "that Dalton gave you distinctly to understand that he was soliciting this office for you, and not himself?"

"Himself!" I exclaimed, pausing in a stupor of amazement, and endeavouring to ac-

count for this strange question by some circumstance in the manner of my visitor? "What, my good friend, can be your opinion of my common sense, when you ask such a question as that? Do you suppose that I would have sacrificed my time, my property, my health, my comfort, every thing that I possessed to forward the interest of Dalton, on a vague and uncertain prospect of advantage to my own family? Would I have givenup the enjoyment of a self-approving heart? Look hither, Clancy. In wealth or in poverty, my fate is fixed for the future. I have become one of the scourges and oppressors of my countrymen. Other, and distant tyrants may say they saw not the evil which they made, they struck blindly and in the dark, they knew not what they did. But I had full knowledge of all the woe that I inflicted. The groans of the oppressed were in my ears, the sight of their misery was before my eyes, the wronged, the houseless, the naked, the starving, the unprotected and defenceless were passing con-

tinually before and around me, but I shut the doors of my better nature against them, and sacrificed every thing to my own selfish views. I have seen fathers torn from their families, innocent hearths made desolate, the judgments of the law inflicted on the unoffending, and punishments, appointed only for extremity, used as preventives; and I said not a word nor made an effort to arrest the evil, lest my own interests should suffer. I put a curb upon my heart and resolved to hack and hew my way to office through the oppressions of my fellow beings. The corruption of grand juries, their shameless, unblushing, open-eyed plunder of the poor, their mean and despicable jobbing, their low and cowardly and sharper-like cross-play into each others hands, the oppression of all, from the legislature which frames a law, to the vilest constable who puts its provisions in effect against the people, all have shocked my observation, and yet have stirred no availing sympathy within my heart. I fixed the

eye of my ambition upon this single object, and have suffered, sacrificed, and sinned more deeply to obtain it than those perhaps have done who strove for the dominion of the world. It is not the greatness of the thing desired, but the inordinacy of the desire itself that makes the interval between the first impulse of ambition and its accomplishment or failure, one hideous dream of agony, fear, meanness, guilt, suspicion and impatience. There has been more human happiness sacrificed to procure me this office which I expect, that I could ever restore in a situation of far more extensive influence."

The good man lifted his hands with an expression of pity and terror.

"And what," said he "if you had made all those sacrifices in vain?"

"In vain?"

"Yes, in vain."

"I already intimated to you, that I had some security for my hopes."

"And what was that?—Dalton's honesty, perhaps?"

"No, something more certain."

"What?"

"His cowardice. Dalton knows me. He has had frequent experience how much I can dare, when my soul is roused. He knows that I would put no consequence whatever in the balance when I meditated a fearful vengeance. He knows that I would as soon take him by the throat and strangle him in the public day-light street, if he wronged me in this, as I would strike a cur out of my way. There is not a man on earth that knows me who would venture on so mad a trick."

"Heaven forbid that you should ever dream of such revenge, and forgive you for this shocking language! You are greatly altered, Abel."

"So I am."

"But what would be your course supposing that you were disappointed after all?"

"I don't know. Go mad, and hang myself I suppose."

"Heaven forbid!"

"Heaven, I fear, would do nothing in the case. I could not even hope for that aid for which I have ceased to pray or even to wish."

"Yet the Almighty hand is not always closed to those who do not ask. You did not solicit the blessing of your creation and of your immortality."

"Aye, but neither had I then made myself unworthy of the benefit."

"If the worthy alone were to be made the objects of divine bounty, how very seldom would it descend upon this bad world! You can lose nothing by hoping, even to the last."

"Well, I pray you, friend Clancy, let

me hope in silence. What is the end of all this?"

"You may have been mistaken in Dalton."

"Speak out, man!" I exclaimed, bursting into a fit of loud anger, which I was no longer able to controul.—"Speak out at once, and let me hear this secret, whatever it is, which is now oppressing you. What has he done? What am I yet to learn? Am I to be hanged, or transported, or burned at a stake, or what? Tell me your news at once."

"I will, I will, friend, if you'll allow me to open my mouth. Dalton himself is appointed to that office which he promised to you. There it is for you in print, on the second column, under the Dublin head. They mention, too, his having arrived yesterday at the Hibernia Hotel, in Waterford."

His words, as he uttered them, seemed to

transform me into stone. The muscles of my face relaxed, my limbs stiffened, my breast tightened almost to a sense of suffocation, and for a long time, I remained gaping on the speaker, attempting to repeat the substance of his intelligence aloud, but only moving my jaws with a vain effort like one who strives to speak in a terrified slumber.

Clancy appeared alarmed by the strong effect which he saw my disappointment produce. While he went on, endeavouring to find some motive for fortitude in my situation, all its circumstances rushed powerfully and clearly upon my mind, now somewhat recovered from the stunning and stupifying influence of its first shock :—

"My daughter!" I exclaimed, in a low, thick whisper, unconscious of a listener, "my poor, lost daughter!"

"If you suppose that any change of fortune

can alter our wishes with respect to Ellen," said the generous Clancy, "you neither know Rowan nor me." But I heard, or heeded him not, then. It was long afterwards I remembered that he had said so.

"My miserable children!"

"They shall live with me until you are more at ease."

"My murdered Mary!"

"Be comforted, Tracy. She has escaped the sight of your sorrows, and is happy. Her prayers will restore your peace and happiness before long."

"Oh, my burthened soul! my lost peace! my wretched, ruined friends! What, had he no feeling? He saw as plainly as I did, the misery that overhung our threshold,—a threshold that care never entered, until he pointed the way. Has he no gratitude? The black villain! He shared the hospitalities of our hearth and board night after night, day after day; we denied

him nothing that was ours to give, he enjoyed with us the confidence of a brother ;—the black villain ! I knew him to be a selfish and vindictive wretch, but I could not think that he would sacrifice a whole family to a transitory convenience ; that he would seem to be our friend, and destroy us without motive or provocation. Had he no fear? Fear ! He shall have, if he has not yet. He shall have cause for fear."

Clancy's horse, which he had fastened at the hall door, here gave an impatient neigh, as if weary of the long conference in which his master was indulging.

"Clancy," said I hastily, "lend me your horse."

"For what purpose ? "

"No matter, will you oblige me ? "

"Certainly, he is at your service, but you must not leave me in ignorance of your movements."

"I am going to find Dalton, and ask him for a sum of money which he owes me."

"Not in your present mood. You must not go now." He caught my arm.

"Stand back, old man, or I will strike you down and trample on you! Am I a child, a fool, or a pet lap dog, that I cannot act upon my own will? Forgive me, good Clancy, but my temper is grown quite infirm and feeble, and you should not cross it. I am going to dun a bad debtor, that is all."

"If I could think so—"

"Now, in the sight of our Creator, friend, I declare to you I have no worse intent. I may, perhaps, unburthen to him the bitterness of my broken heart. I may, perhaps, ask him why he sought me out in my happy and untempted solitude, to ruin me for this world, and put me in peril for the next; I may show him the evil he has done, and expose to him the agony to which he has given birth, but I have

no purpose of laying a violent hand upon him; I may speak daggers to this domestic traitor, but I will use none."

"How can you answer for what the sudden temptation may bring to pass? Remember the intemperate menace which you flung out even before you thought that it was possible Dalton could have acted as he has done."

"I find it is the same in anger as in grief. Injuries as well as misfortunes which in prospect would appear to be wholly insupportable, become light and easy on experience, and fail to produce the extremity of excitement which we apprehended. I am calmer, much calmer now, than I thought it possible I could have been under such a provocation. I am not a liar, nor a hypocrite. If I wished to go with a bad intent, you could not hinder me."

"It is enough," said Clancy, tossing his

head back, as if giving up the contest, "I can do no more. Heaven, I hope, will restrain you, for I do not think it is in the power of man to do so."

Let it not be supposed from what followed that I was really so mean as intentionally to deceive the good old man. I did, then, believe as I said, that my resentment was moderate, and that I held the reins of my temper firmly in my grasp, but the hour of passion is not the most favourable for self-examination. The storm was gathering its strength, and I mistook it for a calm.

END OF VOL. II.

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